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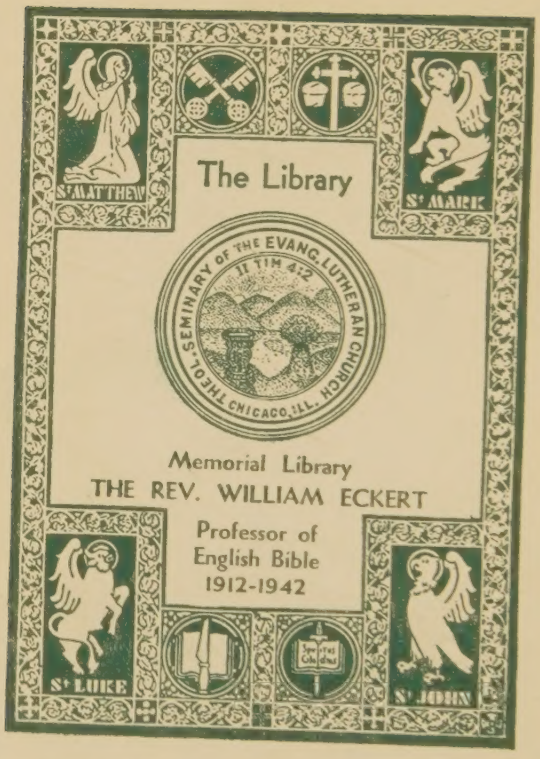
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MY IDEA OF GOD

A SYMPOSIUM OF FAITH

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MY IDEA OF GOD

A SYMPOSIUM OF FAITH

EDITED BY

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35589

BOSTON
LITTLE, BROWN, AND COMPANY
1927

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Published October, 1926
Reprinted February, 1927

THE ATLANTIC MONTHLY PRESS PUBLICATIONS
ARE PUBLISHED BY
LITTLE, BROWN, AND COMPANY
IN ASSOCIATION WITH
THE ATLANTIC MONTHLY COMPANY

Printed in the United States of America

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FOREWORD

> To-day there is but one religious dogma in debate: What do you mean by God? And in this respect to-day is like all the yesterdays. This is the fundamental religious dogma. — A. N. Whitehead. *Religion in the Making.*

Only God is permanently interesting. Other things we may fathom, but He out-tops our thought and can neither be demonstrated nor argued down. The pageant of Nature and the procession of events are endlessly fascinating, yet they are only symbols of something beyond. God is the meaning beyond the facts, the Great Meaning to which all facts contribute, and in which they find explanation. Beyond Him human thought cannot go; short of Him it cannot rest.

God is the First Truth and the Final Reality, and our thought of Him is thought in its longest reach, as experience of Him is the deepest wisdom and peace. It follows, as a consequence, that any uncertainty in our conception of God makes us unhappy in our thinking and feeling about life. For, inevitably, our thought of God determines what we think about ourselves and our fellows, about life and duty and destiny — our philosophy of history and our

interpretation of experience. By the same token, if we are wrong about God we can hardly be right about anything else.

Happily, the crude, crass denial of other days has disappeared, or well nigh so, since it is madness to imagine that "behind the curtain" lie surprises that may make nonsense of all we know here. Atheism is largely a fiction; what we call by that ugly name is nearly always a revulsion from some unworthy thought of God. Every man knows that he is every moment dependent upon a Power other and greater than himself, by whatever name he may call it — Fate, Force, Destiny, God. The real question is not as to the reality of such a Power, but as to the nature and character of Him "in whose great hand we stand."

When we were young we thought of God as a Big Man in the sky, venerable, grave, sometimes kindly, often stern, always watchful. To-day, if many have found their way to a more satisfying thought of "that benediction in which all things move," for all of us the old scenery of faith has faded; and for not a few there is nothing to take its place. Some are smitten mute by a great awe, lest in trying to utter God they lose the Unutterable God, before whom silence is eloquence and wonder is worship. Others put the whole matter out of mind, so far as may be, taking refuge in a cynical indifference or a dim and

blurred agnosticism. Still others are deeply troubled in mind, finding it difficult, if not impossible, to form any conception of God. The universe is so vast, life is often so baffling in its suffering and sorrow, its tragedy and cruelty, and the untoward happenings of the last ten years — dark, dreadful, and confused — have made the problem perplexingly acute for sensitive and reflective minds.

The number of wistful worshipers at the altar of an Unknown God is very great in our day. Many of them remain in the Church, as the thing to do, carrying on by the momentum of memory and habit; but they are sorely troubled about the meaning of life and the validity of its highest ideals. Their concern is not whether they are sinners, but whether there is anything or anybody in the universe who cares enough about them even to frown upon their sins. For many in our time — many more than we realize — faith is "a refined doubt sublimated into a hesitant assumption," when it is anything more than a name for the primal emotions evoked by the unfathomable in thought or the inexpressible in art. What wonder that groping minds seek satisfaction in strange shrines of the occult and the esoteric, or else lose themselves in the mad mysticisms which hang upon all the horizons of our age.

What is God? What do we mean when we use the word? How can we think of God in the light of

our knowledge and the shadow of the facts of life? Can faith and science live together, or are they foes? Can we think scientifically and live spiritually, winning such a sense of God as the masters of the spiritual life knew? What form does the great Reality take in the human mind thus far down the ways of time? What conception of God is equal to our deep need and the realities with which we have to deal? What is the experience of God in the life of to-day? What is the great Fact to which all partial facts contribute? How can we build "the temple of the credible God?"

If our religious leaders cannot help us in this high matter, to whom can we go? It may be said that if men want God they will find Him, now as always, without the aid of short stories or easy essays; and that those who do not care — that is, do not care enough to seek — will not find Him. No doubt it is true, but surely those who give their lives to the search can help busy men and women in their thinking about the Reality which gives worth and meaning to life. Such is the spirit and purpose of the symposium here arranged, to which men of all schools of spiritual thought contribute, each in his own tongue and from his own thought and faith. It is an extraordinary series of papers, in which Jew and Gentile, Catholic and Protestant, Modernist and Fundamentalist, Christian Scientist, Quaker, Ethical

Culturist, Humanist, Empiricist, and Mystic tell us, frankly and intimately, not why they believe in God, but in what terms they think of God, Who is both the mystery and the meaning of life.

There is a wide diversity of insight, thought, and expression in these papers, and it is often difficult to find unity in such variety. Howbeit, if they broaden our minds and deepen our faith in the Reality in which each writer believes, and which each interprets in his own manner, they will at least teach us tolerance, fellowship, and a community of faith. Our total thought of God, age-long and aspiring, is the sum of many moods, many insights, many doubts, many affirmations, but through them all we may find our way to a consecrating confidence in Him "in whose will is our peace." God is not a dream, or a guess, or a shadow cast upon the curtain of our hopes and fears. He is the meaning of the universe and the hope of humanity, and to know Him, as Dante said, is to learn how to make our lives eternal.

JOSEPH FORT NEWTON

Memorial Church of St. Paul
Overbrook, Philadelphia

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MY IDEA OF GOD

A SYMPOSIUM OF FAITH

GOD, THE ETERNAL

H. G. ENELOW

RABBI, TEMPLE EMANU-EL, NEW YORK CITY

Hyman Gerson Enelow was born in Russia fifty years ago; received his education at the University of Chicago, and his training as a rabbi in the Hebrew Union College at Cincinnati. After pastorates at Paducah and Louisville, Kentucky, he was called to Temple Emanu-El, New York City, in 1912. As preacher, scholar, and leader in social welfare, he has had a distinguished ministry in the metropolis. He is a member of the Jewish Historical Society, and a number of articles in the *Jewish Encyclopædia* bear his name.

During the World War Rabbi Enelow served in France as overseas commissioner and general field secretary of the Jewish Welfare Board, and after the Armistice in the Army Educational Corps. In Jewish circles he is well known by such books as *The Synagogue in Modern Life* and *The Faith of Israel*, and far beyond his own church in his extraordinary little book, *A Jewish View of Jesus*, which attracted wide attention in 1920.

A teacher of the oldest living religion, out of which grew a moral idealism which glorifies history, he brings us in this essay a serene faith in the holiness of God, the Eternal. It gives one the inspiration of a stream of spiritual tradition flowing through long ages — a River of God which waters the City of Man, making it bright with hope.

GOD, THE ETERNAL

H. G. ENELOW

RABBI, TEMPLE EMANU-EL, NEW YORK CITY

When I think of God, I do so in terms of Jewish tradition and experience. There is an old teaching that Israel and the Holy One go together. This is a conclusion we must draw from the whole history of the Jewish people. There would have been no Jewish people, with its long and marvelous history, but for the distinctive conception of God embraced by its pioneers and cherished by Jews throughout the ages. "For Thy sake have we been slain all the day," cries the Biblical poet. No less true has this been of Jews everywhere — they have suffered all manner of hardship and abuse. And why? Because they have clung tenaciously to their idea of God.

When the Jews first appeared on the scene of the world, people believed in some sort of deity, as most of us do even now. It is said that the Jew gave God to the world, but that is not quite true. Mankind did not have to wait for the Jew for the God-gift. To believe in some sort of God seems to be part of human nature. Wherever explorers have gone, even among the crudest races, they have found some

He is the One Spiritual Being that caused the world as we know it to come into existence. He created it all, and by His spirit, by His will and law, it lives, endures, and acts. "By the word of the Lord were the heavens made," as the Thirty-third Psalm has it, "and all the host of them by the breath of His mouth: the earth is full of the loving kindness of the Lord." Or, as Isaiah puts it: —

Lift up your eyes on high,
And see: who hath created these?
He that bringeth out their host by number,
He calleth them all by name:
By the greatness of His might, and for that He is strong in power,
Not one faileth!

That, take it all in all, was what the Jew proclaimed. It may sound simple to the modern ear, but it was a radical utterance when first it was made, and it served to set the Jew apart from his fellows.

There is an old legend that when Abraham began to reflect upon the nature of God he at first took the stars for deities, because of their lustre and beauty. But when he realized that they were outshone by the moon, he thought of the moon as Deity. The moon's light, however, faded before the light of the sun, and made him think of the latter as Deity. Yet at night the light of the sun also disappeared. There must be something in the world greater than all these constellations, mused Abraham. Thus gradually he

rose from the deification of Nature to the God of Nature.

Essentially, that is how I still think of God. I think of Him as the Spirit whose energy produced the world with its infinite variety of activities, and by whose will is directed the eternal procession of life.

I wish I might define or describe this Divine Spirit in terms more concrete than thus far seems to have proved possible, but it has been part of the Jewish conviction that a definition of the nature of God in human terms is impossible. "It is a well-known principle," says Maimonides, the great Jewish thinker, "received by all the philosophers, who are precise in their statements, that no definition can be given of God." Repeatedly we are warned by the older rabbis to bear in mind that when the Bible speaks of God in human phrases — as when it refers to the eye of the Lord, or His mouth, or His hand, and suchlike — it merely employs human speech for the sake of reaching our understanding. It is for our sake it uses anthropomorphisms. Even Moses could not behold the entire glory of God. He craved to do so, but what was granted him was a glimpse of the course of God; the Divine Countenance he could not see. A talmudic teacher says that when Moses asked to be allowed to see the Divine glory, he was told that he might see God's acts, but not His face. "While My glory passeth by,

I will put thee in a cleft of the rock, and will cover thee with My hand until I have passed by. And I will take away My hand, and thou shalt see My back; but My face shall not be seen."

Thus, Jewish philosophers have argued time and again that it is futile to try to define God. It is impossible for our finite mind to grasp, much less to describe, the Infinite. The most we can speak of are the Divine qualities and the effect of His activity. If that was the experience of the greatest prophets and profoundest philosophers, what wonder that an attempt at a definition of the Divine Spirit for my satisfaction and yours should baffle me?

But that does not affect my belief in the Divine Spirit. Indeed, I believe in it just as strongly as I believe in my own spirit. What is the secret of my whole personal life, such as it is? What is the explanation of all my efforts and dreams, of my purpose and energy? What makes it possible for me to sit here and write on this theme, and to try to reach the mind of other personalities? It is not necessary for me to be shown the various other marvels of the world; the greatest and most convincing of them all is the human personality, with its basic capacities for thought and dream and creative work, as well as for mental contact with other beings. The thing whereby all this happens within me and through me, I think, is Spirit. That is the motive force of my

life, though I should find it quite impossible to define more closely this spirit of mine or the incalculable mystery of its operation. Nor — with all deference to the most learned anatomists and psychologists — do I think that anyone else has been able to explain more satisfactorily the essence of the human spirit. I have just read that the brain of Anatole France, the illustrious author, was found by scientists to weigh nearly 400 grammes less than the brain of the average adult man. It weighed only 1017 grammes, while the average is 1390 grammes. However, we are told, the convolutions of his brain were deep and numerous, and this is supposed to explain the genius of Anatole France. But shall we accept such an explanation as adequate? The spirit of man is real, though we may be unable to analyze and define it. The Spirit of the universe is no less real to me, though it eludes our verbal capacity.

Neither is it any less difficult for the human mind to describe, or sum up, the qualities of God. To describe is to compare. If we trace a character, we compare it, consciously or no, with some other character. But this is out of the question when we speak of God. "To whom will ye liken God?" asks Isaiah, "or what likeness will ye compare unto Him?" It is easier to affirm, according to the old Jewish philosophers, what God is not than what He

is. All we know is that He is not like any other being. When we think or speak of Him, the positive and the negative must go together. "Magnified and praised be the living God," says the mediæval Jewish poet, — I give a prose version of his sublime poem, which has become part of the Jewish prayer book, — "He is, and there is no limit in time unto His being. He is One, and there is no unit like unto His unity; inconceivable and unending is His unity. He hath neither bodily form nor substance; we can compare naught unto Him in His holiness. He was before anything that hath been created — even the first; but His existence had no beginning."

To think of God is a case of running and turning back at the same time, as a sixteenth-century Jewish mystic has it. When your mind affirms the existence of God, he said, don't allow your imagination to assume that He exists because your mind accepts His existence, for, if so, your mind may conceive of His existence in a limited and material form. Your mind must realize only the necessity of His existence, and then turn back. If your imagination goes further than that, you might find yourself contemplating God in regard to His substance, and the imagination is prone to circumscribe and materialize its objects. Therefore, set a bound to your mind, and do not let it go too far! Affirm His existence, but keep your intellect from trying to comprehend Him. Be like

one who runs and recedes at the same time: run toward the affirmation of His existence, and recede so that you may form no limited or material image. As we read in *The Book of Creation*, the old Jewish mystical work: "If thy heart runs, turn back!"

Nevertheless, two qualities above all others are associated in my mind with the idea of God, namely, universality and holiness.

One cannot now think of God as the Spirit creating and pervading the world without apprehending Him as universal, as free from any limitation of time and space, and from any of the divisions and conflicts which we find among men and which at times human beings have attributed to the Deity. Even among the Jews, in ancient times, there were such as had gotten to think of God in local terms. They thought that Judea or Samaria was the particular abode of their God, and if perchance they found themselves elsewhere they believed they were banished from the Divine Presence. That is what aggravated the tragedy of the exile for the Jews who, in the year 586 B.C., after the destruction of the first Temple, were taken captive to Babylon. In a foreign country, they felt, they could not possibly worship their own God. They were far away from Him, and He was far away from them. It was sheer sacrilege to sing His songs in a strange land. That was a local idea of the Deity which the Jews had acquired during the

period of their national existence, and which they probably borrowed from their neighbors. It showed the impact of politics on their religious concepts.

But this was altogether contrary to the essence of the Jewish idea of God. Who says One, says universal. Under the influence of such prophets as Ezekiel and the Babylonian Isaiah, the Jews recovered the larger vision of the nature of God. God is in Babylon no less than in Palestine. Wherever the spirit is alive, there is the Divine Spirit, ready to quicken and to create. That was the message of Ezekiel to his fellow captives by the rivers of Babylon, conveyed in his parable of the Dry Bones and the Quickening Spirit, which is one of the important landmarks on the road of the religious progress, not only of the Jew but of humanity. "Thus saith the Lord God: Come from the four winds, O breath, and breathe upon these slain, that they may live!"

In the school of suffering the Jews learned anew, and unforgettably, the lesson that God is universal. It was a lesson which man needed to learn in order to rise above the notion of local deities, and which, alas! it is not so certain that mankind as yet has made part of its thought. Yet, if I think of God as the Spirit of the world, I cannot help thinking of Him as universal any more than I can think of my own spirit as being confined to some particular portion of my personality and excluding all the rest.

Next to universality, I think of holiness as the most comprehensive quality of God. Both qualities the prophet Isaiah extols in his immortal cry: "Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of hosts, the whole earth is full of His glory!" As God is everywhere, so He is holy. What Isaiah meant by the Divine holiness may well serve to express my conception of it, and perhaps yours. When the prophet exclaimed that God was holy, he meant two things: first, that God was greater, more august, more awe-inspiring than anything else within human experience; that He was immeasurably above the loftiest height of human attainment. And, secondly, he meant that God was holy in a moral sense: that He was the essence of all moral perfection conceivable to man. To him God was not a mere reflection of Nature or of man; God had a character of His own, which depended in no way upon the conduct or destiny of His people, but was righteous in itself and made for righteousness in the world. This twofold idea of God's holiness has formed the traditional Jewish belief, and it is still shared, I think, by every intelligent and devout Jew.

If God is morally perfect, it goes without saying that He must be a God of love. The Jew has always associated the quality of love with the character of God, though, strange to say, a good many people are not aware of it. Some of the most educated men

are still found harping on the lack of love in the Jewish God. That, of course, is absurd, as any reader of the Jewish Bible must know. To the Jew, God always was a loving and compassionate God, long-suffering and abundant in loving kindness and truth, as He is called in Moses' vision. Of course, the Jew has thought of God as just and righteous. But there is no contradiction between justice and love. On the contrary, the two belong to each other. They are equally important to the perfection of character and the maintenance of the world, as far as it is given to us to understand. When God created the world, say the rabbis, He employed both qualities, justice and love, for without either the world could not have endured.

We still believe in the love of God, as well as in His justice, though, I know, life often challenges this belief. There are the sorrows, disasters, tragedies of the world; how reconcile them with the love of God? The challenge is not new. It is as old as Jeremiah and Job; and I can meet it in no better way than by following their example of retaining my faith in God's righteousness even when grievously tried by events of the moment. Indeed, faith still is the core of the God-belief, in spite of all efforts to prove it intellectually. "The righteous liveth by his faith." As Walt Whitman sings in his prayer of Columbus: —

I will cling fast to Thee,
O God, though the waves buffet me,
Thee, Thee, at least I know.

One often is asked whether modern science can go hand in hand with such faith, or, indeed, with the idea of God. As far as I know, there is nothing in the scientific study of the world to displace or replace such faith. Even in the early days of the modern scientific movement, in the latter part of the last century, Thomas Huxley asserted that there was nothing in science to make religious faith impossible. All he maintained was that he could find no proof for the customary religious affirmations in his studies of the physical universe. He did not know, he said, whether the assertions of religion were true or no. Therefore, he called himself an agnostic — one who does not know. Yet he admitted that in the religious teachings of the Jewish prophets religion had reached its highest expression. What Huxley fought for was the separation of the living body of "prophetic Israel" from the mass of extraneous material that had grown up about it. "They created," he says of the Jewish prophets, "the first consistent, remorseless, naked monotheism which, so far as history records, appeared in the world, and they inseparably united therewith an ethical code which, for its purity and for its efficiency as a bond of social life, was and is unsurpassed."

Since Huxley's day scientists have realized more and more that the physical sciences are not necessarily at odds with the idea of God and faith in Him. Science studies the laws of the universe. It tries to discover and to master them. But thus far it has not been able to find the secret of those laws, and certainly not the secret of life. An ancient rabbi said that if all the sages of the world came together and tried to create the wing of one little insect, they would be unable so to do. Modern scientists have not as yet gone beyond that point. They cannot create life, and even if they could by the aid of chemical experiments accomplish the miracle, as some have been trying, could they put into their creation all the possibilities of growth which life has possessed? Many a biologist and physicist and chemist has admitted frankly that natural science had served to strengthen his faith in God rather than weaken it. This, I believe, applies especially to the Jewish idea of God — the Spiritual Being who made the world, and who lives and works within it in accord with unchangeable laws of which He is the source and of which the universe is the manifold expression.

Man also, I believe, is meant to be an expression of God. This is what to me is implied in the old biblical assertion that man was made in the image of God. Man was created for the purpose and with the possibility of becoming godlike. And there is

only one way of his becoming godlike, namely, by acquiring or unfolding the godlike qualities. He is meant to act after the Divine fashion.

It is noteworthy that in the Jewish Bible there is no phrase corresponding to the English "to be religious." This thought the Jewish Bible expresses by such phrases as to "walk with God," or to walk before God, or after God, or to walk in the ways of God. What does it mean, asked the old rabbis, to walk in God's ways? It means, they said, that we should try to imitate His qualities of compassion, of generosity, of humility, and every other ethical quality.

In other words, the idea of God, from the Jewish point of view, carries with it the idea of an ethical life. God is not an Absolute Being, or a Static Being, of whom I can think without forming any personal relation. On the contrary, in so far as I think of Him, He becomes part of my life, and my life, my conduct, becomes part of Him. "To know Thee," we read in the Wisdom of Solomon, "is perfect righteousness; yea, to know Thy dominion is the root of righteousness." To think of God is to be with Him, to act with Him, to live and move in Him. "Walk before Me, and be thou perfect" — as the Bible has it. And again: "I will walk among you, and will be your God, and ye shall be My people!" The more godlike quality I put into my life, the more fully I realize my idea of God.

THE LIVING GOD

REV. BERTRAND L. CONWAY, C.S.P.

CHURCH OF THE PAULIST FATHERS, NEW YORK CITY

A New Yorker, born in 1872, Bertrand L. Conway was educated in the public schools of the city, and after a year in the City College finished his collegiate studies in St. Charles College, Maryland. He studied Divinity in St. Thomas Seminary, and was ordained to the priesthood in 1896, after which he devoted two years to postgraduate work at the Catholic University of Washington. He is one of the directors of the Catholic Unity League, and since 1898 has been a Catholic Defense lecturer for the United States and Canada.

A prolific writer of books, pamphlets, articles, editorials, and reviews for both the American and foreign Catholic press, Father Conway is widely known outside his own Church. Perhaps his best-known book is *The Question Box*, which grew out of his responses to inquiries in his missions. More than two million copies of it have been sold. His little book on *The Virgin Birth* has also passed through many editions.

In the article here to be read, a great preacher sets forth the Catholic doctrine of God in simple and impressive manner, as if talking to a group of ordinary folk; and it is well to read it in a day when the spiritual sky is overcast, and many are uncertain of their way.

THE LIVING GOD

REV. BERTRAND L. CONWAY, C.S.P.

CHURCH OF THE PAULIST FATHERS, NEW YORK CITY

THE question of God's existence and nature is of vital importance to-day, inasmuch as many modern unbelievers are dismissing with a disdainful wave of the hand all belief in a personal God. The debate, moreover, between modern unbelief and theism is no longer confined to the university lecture hall, but is carried on openly in the market place. The rationalist of our day is doing his utmost in public print and on public platform to convince the multitude that material well-being is the be-all and end-all of existence, and that religion — man's acknowledgment of a Supreme Being and his utter dependence upon Him — is an outworn superstition.

The Catholic idea of the essence and knowability of God is thus set forth by the Vatican Council: "The Catholic Church believes that there is one true and living God, the Creator and Lord of heaven and earth, Almighty, Eternal, Immense, Incomprehensible, Infinite in intellect and will and in all perfection; Who, being One, Individual, altogether simple and unchangeable Substance, must be asserted

to be really and essentially distinct from the world, most happy in Himself, and ineffably exalted above everything that exists or can be conceived." Holy Mother Church does hold and teach that God, the Beginning and End of all things, can certainly be known from created things by the natural light of reason; "for the invisible things of Him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made."[1]

Our idea of God is acquired spontaneously at the very dawn of reason. Our certainty of His existence is not necessarily the result of scientific reasoning. But the mind of man, as we are assured by Wisdom[2] and by St. Paul,[3] naturally rises from nature to nature's Origin and Source; from things caused and contingent to a First Necessary Cause, on which all things depend. The universe points clearly to a One, True, and Living God, from whom all existence comes and without whom life and all its development would be impossible.

Man feels instinctively that he is dependent and limited in his thought and his activity; he feels within himself needs and necessities which call imperatively for complete satisfaction. Only a Supreme Being, All-Powerful and All-Loving, can satisfy the aspirations and longings of his inmost soul.

The many proofs that Christian thinkers offer for

[1] Romans, 1: 20. [2] Wisdom, XIII. [3] Rom., 1.

the existence of God merely deepen and confirm the solid conviction of His personality already abiding in our hearts. They are cumulative in force, and must be studied as a whole if we are to realize perfectly their full value. They reveal God to us as the First Cause, the Necessary Being, the Prime Mover, the One and Perfect Being, the Designer and Orderer of the universe, the Origin of Life, the Supreme Lawgiver, and the Ultimate Good. Space forbids my developing these proofs in detail; they may be studied in the pages of any manual of natural theology.

I think it good, however, to outline in the briefest possible manner the two arguments which, to my mind, make the most persuasive appeal to the man in the street — the argument from design and the argument from conscience.

The argument from design may be thus stated: The adaptation of means to ends is an evident proof of an intelligent cause. It is clear that nature affords us thousands of instances of such adaptation. Nature, therefore, is the result of an intelligent cause, God. Our minds cannot help recognizing purpose and finality in nature's operations. Mere chance, for example, cannot account for the complex arrangement of the countless parts that combine to form the retina of the human eye, nor for the marvelous make-up of a bird's wing.

"The wings of a bird will afford an instance in point. . . . Even given the requisite formation of the interior members, which enables them to act as wings, the problem of aerial flight is still far from being solved. The surface of the members must be greatly extended, yet without adding materially to their weight; and the body must be provided with a covering which shall keep it at an nearly equal temperature, while not impeding flight. If then final causation be a figment, and nothing be at work save physical causation, how amazing is the solution which nature affords. The hair which clothes other animals is here replaced by feathers — a covering which is extremely light, and at the same time is an effective protection against cold; while the greater feathers are of such proportions that they give to the wings the extension which they require. Nor is this all. Were feathers liable to become saturated with rain, flight would be only possible under very restricted conditions. But we find, in fact, that the bird is provided with a special gland, secretive of an oily substance with which it covers its wings, and which has the property of rendering them altogether impermeable to water." [1]

Not only is order everywhere present in nature, but beauty also meets us on every side, whether in the sky, upon the earth, or in the ocean's depths.

[1] Joyce, *Natural Theology*, p. 125.

We observe it in the gorgeous coloring of the evening sunset and in the bright plumage of the humming bird; in the daintiness of the tiniest fern and in the massive strength of the giant redwood of the California forests; in the grace of the fleet-footed antelope and in the litheness of the tiger of the Indian jungles; in the creations of man's imagination — in the inspired lyric, in the ordered symphony, and in the world's masterpieces of painting and of sculpture.

Nowhere is this purposive finality so striking as in man, who possesses characteristics in common with all the lower forms of nature, inanimate, vegetable, and animal. Distinct from them, however, he lives a rational life, his intellect ever asking the why and the wherefore of things. He recognizes the laws and principles that govern his intellectual and moral judgments; he sees that they are not arbitrary and purposeless, but ordered and ruled for definite and established ends.

Do not this order and beauty, everywhere manifest in this universe of ours, point, as the needle to the pole, to the Divine Intelligence, the Divine Beauty, the Divine Designer of all things — God?

As the proof from design brings out clearly the intelligence of God, so the proof from conscience brings out evidently His holiness. What is conscience? It is the human mind, making a practical judgment upon the morality of our every thought,

word, and deed. It commands us with decision: "This is right; do it. This is wrong; avoid it." And we feel at once the imperative call upon our obedience. Here we are dealing, not with an abstract idea, which the modern mind usually fights shy of, but with a simple, concrete fact, which everyone experiences day by day. There exists within us a strange, mysterious power which is constantly comparing all our actions with an absolute standard of right and wrong, and condemning them without appeal when they go counter to its ordering. Conscience speaks of a necessary duty which we owe. It brings us face to face with an obligatory law whose commands are authoritative, and whose dictates are final and unquestioned.

Law always implies a lawgiver. A command always implies a superior who issues the command. Who can this Final, Absolute, Supreme Authority be save God, the Original Source of all morality, the one Perfect Arbiter of right and wrong? Conscience is merely His voice.

Cardinal Newman puts the argument from conscience well. He writes: "Conscience always involves the recognition of a living object towards which it is directed. Inanimate things cannot stir our affections; these are correlative with persons. If, as is the case, we feel responsibility, are ashamed, are frightened, at transgressing the voice of conscience,

this implies that there is One to whom we are responsible, before whom we are ashamed, whose claims upon us we fear. If, on doing wrong, we feel the same tearful, broken-hearted sorrow which overwhelms us on hurting a mother; if, in doing right, we enjoy the same sunny serenity of mind, the same soothing, satisfactory delight which follows on our receiving praise from a father, we certainly have within us the image of some Person to whom our love and veneration look, in whose smile we find our happiness, for whom we yearn, towards whom we direct our pleadings, in whose anger we are troubled and waste away. These feelings in us are such as require for their exciting cause an Intelligent Being. Thus the phenomena of conscience avail to impress the imagination with the picture of a Supreme Governor, a Judge, holy, just, powerful, all-seeing, retributive." [1]

If you ask me why some men still persist in denying the existence of God, despite the clear testimony of reason and the general consent of all peoples from the beginning of the world, the answer is not far to seek. Just as the human will can freely and deliberately sin against the light and do the most abominable things, so the human mind can defiantly and illogically deny the most self-evident truths. The Psalmist is right in calling the atheist a "fool." St. Paul is right in

[1] *Grammar of Assent*, p. 109.

declaring him "inexcusable." Personal sin too often blinds man's vision of the unseen world of the spirit. "The sensual man perceiveth not these things that are of the Spirit of God, for it is foolishness to him, and he cannot understand, because it is spiritually examined." [1]

Someone has well said that the Catholic doctrine of God is a compound of assurance and humility. The assurance is voiced in St. Paul's words to the Athenians: "What therefore you worship without knowing it, that I preach to you," [2] the humility in his letter to the Corinthians: "We see now through a glass in a dark manner. . . . Now I know in part." [3]

We know to a certainty that God exists, and we know positively what He is — but only in a very dim and inadequate way. The agnostic is most illogical when he admits the existence of a First Cause behind created things and then dismisses Him as utterly unknowable, merely because he cannot picture the Infinite and the Self-Existent in his imagination. We do know God in and through His works, and this is a true knowledge, however inadequate. The limited mind of man cannot hope to comprehend the Infinite God. He would cease to be God if we could. The Sacred Scriptures on page after page tell us of the utter incomprehensibility of

[1] I Corinthians, II: 14. [2] Acts, XVII: 23. [3] I Cor., XIII: 12.

God. "For who among men is he that can know the counsel of God? . . . The things that are in heaven who shall search out?" [1] "O the depth of the riches of the wisdom and of the knowledge of God! How incomprehensible are His judgments, and how unsearchable His ways! For who hath known the mind of the Lord? Or who hath been His counsellor?" [2]

Catholics believe that God is the one Being of whom we can say that He is and must be. God does not happen to exist, like all things created; God *is* necessarily and essentially. God gave His name to Moses in the burning bush as the "I Am Who Am," [3] that is, I am the One Being that really Is. In no more perfect way can the nature of God be brought home to the human mind.

Many modern unbelievers confuse "being," viewed as a universal term, with "Being," as we refer it to God. The former word has the least content of any idea the human mind can form. It signifies merely that which is capable of existence. The latter word in reference to God implies the Fullness of All Reality, and the Infinite Unity of All Perfections. This is the Catholic answer to the charge that we make God a mere abstraction.

It is also asserted that the Catholic idea of God

[1] Wis., IX: 13, 16. [2] Rom., XI: 33, 34.
[3] Exodus, III: 14.

makes Him a mere magnified man. When we and the Bible speak of God as seeing or hearing, or being pleased with the just man and angry with the sinner, everyone that thinks at all must recognize that we are speaking metaphorically. We do not worship a man made to our image and likeness, — a god like the finite God of Mr. Wells, the English novelist.

But you tell me: "All the terms you apply to God are drawn from the finite and limited things you know and experience. You must needs then fashion a God after your own image." Not at all. When we attribute to God the perfections we find in creatures, we do not ascribe them to Him in an identical sense. If we did, God would be indeed nothing but a magnified man. On the contrary, we attribute the pure perfections of creatures — such as goodness, truth, and beauty — to God only by analogy. A comparison will illustrate clearly our meaning. We may, for instance, compare the portrait of the President of the United States with the living man himself, saying of both portrait and person, in different senses: "This is Mr. Calvin Coolidge." In like manner we assert, in totally different senses, "Man is good"; "God is good." More accurately, perhaps, we should say, God is Goodness; God is Truth; for He possesses these perfections in the most eminent degree. This analogical proportion of existence between creatures and God is the very essence of the

knowability of God. It is the only possible way in which the Infinite can be accurately studied and known.

We must not forget that in God all His attributes are identical with His Divine Essence; that every one of them, as we conceive them, implies all the others. Truth, wisdom, justice, omnipotence, omnipresence, is the Divine Nature of God, viewed — because of our limited faculty of knowledge — under a special aspect. We are forced from the very make-up of our minds to consider separately and piecemeal what in God is infinite unity of essence.

The God we worship, therefore, is not an abstraction, nor a magnified man. He is a personal God, the Creator and Conserver of all that exists, eternal and unchangeable in His almighty intelligence and will, just, merciful, holy. It is certainly a most comforting and consoling thought that God, supremely happy in Himself, lovingly created the heavens and the earth for His own honor and glory and for our eternal well-being. The fact of creation makes religion possible. I am not my own, but God's, for He keeps me from the abyss of nothingness by the exercise of His perpetual, all-abiding care.

Creation emphasizes the complete distinction between God and the matter and force of the universe. He is not a part of things. He is in no way identified with things. His relation to them is not a sum in

addition, as we might add the number of soldiers in a regiment or enumerate the specimens in a botanical museum. God is the Absolute and Transcendent Being, utterly over and above all possible modes of the finite creation, but at the same time immanent in the universe which He has made out of its original nothingness. "In Him we live and move and are." [1] His presence, His power, His activity, are at all times and in all places necessary, not only to sustain finite things in being, but also to make their every activity possible. A Creator who is not at the same time a Conserver is to our mind unthinkable.

Creation tells of a Divine Person who loves us and craves for our love. The highest thing we know on earth is human personality — intelligence, volition, and self-consciousness. The Maker thereof must at least be that highest thing. Because God is our beginning, He must needs be our Lord, with a right to command us; because He is our beginning, He must needs be our end, or the final goal of our striving. So St. John rightly defines religion: "I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end." [2]

Our greatest effort to understand God in the natural order is at best a feeble groping in the dark, "for our minds are no more fit for what by its very nature is clearest, than are the eyes of bats for the light of day." That is why God gave us a fuller,

[1] Acts, XVII: 28. [2] Apocalypse, I: 8.

supernatural revelation in the coming of Jesus Christ, the God-Man. Revelation, surpassing as it does the powers of the unaided reason, in no way contradicts what we prove from natural religion alone. Faith merely confirms what reason discovers of itself, and adds to its imperfect light the dazzling brightness of the divine illumining. As St. Paul says: "First the natural; afterwards the spiritual or supernatural." [1]

Faith alone can initiate us into the intimate mysteries of the Divine Nature of God, which subsists in a Unity of Three Persons, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost. We accept the Blessed Trinity on the authority of Christ, the Son of God. Of all divine truths this is the most impenetrable to reason. The human mind can merely prove that it contains no intrinsic impossibility.

Jesus Christ reveals to us most fully the true idea of God. He is a just Father, who will render to every man according to his works; a merciful Judge, to whom we may go confidently seeking pardon, and to whom we may pray in our necessities with an infallible certainty of gracious answering; a tender Providence, who feeds the birds of the air, clothes the lilies of the field, and protects with a special care the souls of all His children; an Infinite, All-Wise Goodness, to whom we may joyfully submit without

[1] I Cor., xv: 46

any loss of our essential independence, and whom we willingly obey, striving with His grace to do His will on earth as it is done in heaven; an Omnipotent, Eternal Power, who knows all things real or possible in an eternal Now, and to whom our weak minds may gladly pay reverence and obedience; a loving Person, who first showed His love for us in creation, revealed it more perfectly in deigning to become man for our sakes, and who will reward us finally, if we are true to Him, in the face-to-face union of the Beatific Vision. "We know, that, when He shall appear, we shall be like to Him, because we shall see Him as He is."[1] "And they shall see His face . . . and night shall be no more: and they shall not need the light of the lamp, nor the light of the sun, because the Lord God shall enlighten them."[2]

[1] I John, III: 2. [2] Apoc., XXII: 4.

MY IDEA OF GOD

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John Gresham Machen was born in Baltimore in 1881. After graduating from Johns Hopkins and Princeton Universities and the Princeton Theological Seminary, he studied in Marburg and Göttingen Universities, and was ordained to the Presbyterian ministry in 1914. Since 1914 he has been associate professor of New Testament literature in Princeton Seminary, doing work betimes with the French Army and the A.E.F., in France and Belgium, during the World War.

Besides textbooks of Greek and many articles in reviews, Dr. Machen has written two books of unusual quality for general readers, *Christianity and Liberalism* (in which he holds that liberal Christianity is not Christianity at all, but a confection of modern theories exactly opposed to the Christian faith, with which there can be neither compromise nor unity) and *What Is Faith?* which inspired an extraordinary symposium in *The British Weekly*.

In the recent discussion which has agitated the Churches — now happily subsiding — Dr. Machen was the outstanding exponent of the conservative attitude, adding to a vital mind a lucid logic and a cogent style which left no shadow upon his meaning. His essay has value equally for its directness and its sincerity.

MY IDEA OF GOD

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If my idea of God were really mine, if it were one which I had evolved out of my own inner consciousness, I should attribute very little importance to it myself, and should certainly expect even less importance to be attributed to it by others. If God is merely a fact of human experience, if theology is merely a branch of psychology, then I for my part shall cease to be interested in the subject at all. The only God about whom I can feel concerned is one who has objective existence, an existence independent of man.

But if there be such a really and independently existent Being, it seems extremely unlikely that there can be any knowledge of Him unless He chooses to reveal Himself: a divine Being that could be discovered apart from revelation would be either a mere name for an aspect of man's nature — the feeling of reverence or loyalty or the like — or else, if possessing objective existence, a mere passive thing that would submit to human investigation like the substances that are analyzed in the laboratory. And in either

case it would seem absurd to apply to such a Being the name of "God."

A really existent God, then, if He be more than merely passive, if He be a living God, can be known only through His revelation of Himself. And it is extremely unlikely that such revelation should have come to me alone. I reject, therefore, the whole subjectivizing tendency in religion that is so popular at the present time — the whole notion that faith is merely an "adventure" of the individual man. On the contrary, I am on the search for some revelation of God that has come to other men as well as to me, and that has come into human life, not through a mere analysis of human states of consciousness but distinctly from the outside. Such revelation I find in the Christian religion.

The idea of God, therefore, which I shall here endeavor to summarize is simply the Christian idea. I have indeed been enabled to make it my own; I love it with all my heart; but I should not love it if I thought that it had been discovered merely in the depths of my own soul. On the contrary, the very thing that I love about it is that it comes to me with an external authority which I hold to be the authority of God Himself.

At this point, however, there will no doubt be an objection. We have spoken about the knowledge of God; but in reality the knowledge of God, it is often

said, is unnecessary to our contact with Him, or at least it occupies merely a secondary place, as the symbolic and necessarily changing expression of an experience which in itself is ineffable. Such depreciation of knowledge in the sphere of religion has been widely prevalent in the modern world, and at no time has it been more prevalent than now. It underlies the mysticism of Schleiermacher and his many successors; it underlies the Ritschlian rejection of "metaphysics"; it underlies the popular exaltation of "abiding experiences" at the expense of the mental categories in which they are supposed to be expressed; and in general it is at the roots of the entire separation between religion and theology, experience and doctrine, faith and knowledge, which is so marked a characteristic of the religious teaching of the present day.

In opposition to this entire tendency, I for my part must still insist upon the primacy of the intellect. It may seem strange that the intellect should have to be defended by one who has so slight an experimental acquaintance with it as I; but reason in our days has been deposed from her queenly throne by pragmatism the usurper, and, wandering in exile as she does, cannot be too critical of any humble persons who rally to her defense. And, as a matter of fact, the passionate anti-intellectualism of the present age is having its natural fruit in a lamentable

intellectual as well as moral decline. Such decadence can be checked — I, for my part, believe — only by a reëmphasis upon truth as distinguished from practice, and in particular only by a return from all anti-intellectual mysticism or positivism to the knowledge of God.

Certainly, unless our contact with God is based upon knowledge of Him it ceases to possess any moral quality at all. Pure feeling is non-moral; what makes my affection for a human friend, for example, such an ennobling thing is the knowledge which I possess of the character of my friend. So it is also with our relation to God: religion is moral and personal only if it is based upon truth.

If then, in order that there may be a moral and personal relation to God, there must be knowledge of Him, how may that knowledge be attained? I have no new ways to suggest: the only ways of knowing God which I can detect are found in nature, in conscience, and in the Bible.

God is revealed, I hold, in the first place through the things that He has made. "The heavens declare the glory of God, and the firmament showeth His handiwork." This revelation of God through nature is commonly called — or used to be commonly called — "natural religion." And natural religion is by no means altogether dead. Modern men of science, if they be thoughtful, admit that there is a

mystery in the presence of which the wisdom of the wisest men is dumb; the true man of science stands at length before a curtain that is never lifted, a mystery that rebukes all pride. But this revelation through nature is far richer than many men of science suppose; in reality it presents to us not merely a blank mystery, but the mighty God. The revelation comes to different men in different ways. For example, when I viewed the spectacle of the total eclipse of the sun at New Haven on the twenty-fourth of January 1925, I was confirmed in my theism. Such phenomena make us conscious of the wonderful mechanism of the universe, as we ought to be conscious of it every day; at such moments anything like materialism seems to be but a very pitiful and very unreasonable thing. I am no astronomer, but of one thing I was certain: when the strange, slow-moving shadow was gone, and the world was bathed again in the wholesome light of day, I knew that the sun, despite its vastness, was made for us personal beings and not we for the sun, and that it was made for us personal beings by the living God.

In the second place, God is revealed by His voice within us. I am perfectly well aware that that voice is not always heard. Conscience has fallen on evil days: it is drowned by a jargon of psychological terms; it is supposed to be rendered unnecessary by an all-embracing network of legislative enactments.

The categories of guilt and retribution are in many quarters thought to be out of date, and scientific sociology is substituted for the distinction between right and wrong. But I for my part am not favorably impressed with the change; self-interest seems to me to be but a feeble substitute for the moral law, and its feebleness, despite bureaucratic regulation of the details of human life and despite scientific study both of individual human behavior and of the phenomena of human society, seems to be becoming evident in an alarming moral decline. The raging sea of passion cannot, I think, be kept back permanently by the flimsy mud embankments of utilitarianism; but recourse may again have to be had to the solid masonry of the law of God.

In the third place, God is revealed in the Bible. He is revealed in the Bible in a way which is entirely distinct from those ways that have just been mentioned. The Bible tells us things about God of which no slightest hint is found either in nature or in conscience. Of those things we shall speak in a moment. But first it should be observed that, in addition to that fresh information, the Bible also confirms the revelation which has already been given. The confirmation is certainly necessary; for the revelation of God both in nature and in conscience has been sadly obscured. In comparing the fortieth chapter of Isaiah or the first verse of Genesis or the teaching

of Jesus with the feeble and hesitant theism which is the highest that philosophy has to offer, and in comparing the unaided voice of conscience with the fifty-first Psalm or the searching law presented in the Sermon on the Mount, one feels that in the Bible a veil has been removed from the eyes of men. The facts were already there, and also the gift of human reason for the apprehension of them; but the light of reason somehow was obscured until in the Bible men were enabled to see what they ought to have seen before.

Thus, in these three ways there is attained, I hold, a genuine and objective knowledge of God. Certainly that knowledge does not remove the feeling of wonder which is dear to the mystic's heart. Indeed, it ought to accentuate that feeling a thousandfold. There is nothing in the knowledge of God which should stifle, but everything which should awaken, the "numinous" quality in religion of which Otto speaks. God has gently pulled aside the curtain which veils His Being from the gaze of men, but the look thus granted beyond only reveals anew the vastness of the unknown. If a man's knowledge of God removes his sense of wonder in the presence of the Eternal, then he has not yet known as he ought to know.

Yet partial knowledge is not necessarily false, and there are certain things which are known about God.

At the very centre of those things stands that which is most often denied to-day; the very centre and core of Christian belief is found in the awful transcendence of God, the awful separateness between God and the world. That is denied by modern men in the interests of what is called, by a perversion of a great truth, the "immanence" of God. We will have nothing to do — men say — with the far-off God of historic theology; instead we will worship a God who exists only in and with the world, a God whose life is found only in that life which pulsates through the life of every one of us. Pantheism, in other words, is substituted for theism, on the ground that it brings God nearer to man.

But has it really the desired effect? I, for my part, think not. Far from bringing God nearer to man, the pantheism of our day really pushes Him very far off; it brings Him physically near, but at the same time makes Him spiritually remote; it conceives of Him as a sort of blind vital force, but ceases to regard Him as a Person whom a man can love. Destroy the free personality of God and the possibility of fellowship with Him is gone; we cannot love a God of whom we are parts.

Thus, I for my part cling with all my heart to what are called the metaphysical attributes of God — His infinity and omnipotence and creatorhood. The finite God of Mr. H. G. Wells seems to me to

be but a curious product of a modern mythology; He is to my mind not God, but *a* god; and in the presence of all such imaginings I am obliged to turn, very humbly but very resolutely, toward the dread, stupendous mystery of the Infinite, and say with Augustine: "Thou hast made us for Thyself, and our heart is restless until it finds its rest in Thee."

This devotion to the so-called metaphysical attributes of God is unpopular at the present day. There are many who tell us that we ought to cease to be interested in the question how the world was made, or what will be our fate when we pass through the dark portals of death. Instead, we are told, we ought to worship a God who is not powerful but merely good. Such is the "ethical theism" of Dr. McGiffert and many others; Jesus, it seems, was quite wrong in the stress that He undoubtedly laid upon the doctrine of heaven and hell and the sovereignty of God. We moderns, it seems, can find a higher, disinterested worship — far higher than that of Jesus — in reverence for goodness divested of the vulgar trappings of power.

It sounds noble at first. But consider it for a moment, and its glory turns to ashes and leaves us in despair. What is meant by a goodness that has not physical power? Is not "goodness" in itself the merest abstraction? Is it not altogether without meaning except as belonging to a person? And does

not the very notion of a person involve the power to act? Goodness divorced from power is therefore no goodness at all. The truth is that overmuch abstraction has here destroyed even that which is intended to be conserved. Make God good and not powerful, and both God and goodness have been destroyed.

In the presence of all such abstractions, the heart of man turns with new longing to the Living and Holy God, to the God who is revealed in nature, in the dread voice of conscience, and in the Bible. But as one turns to such a God, there is no comfort but only despair; the whole human race is separated from God by an awful abyss. Strange indeed, to us Christians, seems the complacency of the world; the very root of our religion is found in the consciousness of sin.

But at that point, on the basis of such presuppositions, there comes the really distinctive revelation that the Bible contains. It is not a revelation of things that already were true, but the explanation of an act. The Christian religion is based not merely upon permanent truths of religion, but upon things that happened in Palestine nineteen hundred years ago; it is based not merely upon knowledge of what God is, but also on a record of what God did.

Into our sinful world — the Christian holds — there came in God's good time a Divine Redeemer.

His coming, marked by a stupendous miracle, was a voluntary act of condescension and love. During the days of His flesh, He proclaimed by His word and example the law of God. He proclaimed it in a new and terrible way that of itself could only deepen our despair. But with His proclamation of the law there went His proclamation of the gospel; with His pronouncement of the Divine judgment upon sin there went His offer of Himself as Saviour. When that offer was received in faith, there was not only cure of bodily ills, but also forgiveness in the presence of God.

At first faith was implicit; men trusted themselves to Jesus without fully knowing how it was that He could save. But even while He was on earth He pointed forward with ever increasing clearness to the redeeming work which He had come into the world to do. And at last, on the cross, that work was done. The Divine Saviour and Lord, for the love wherewith He loved us, bore all the guilt of our sins, made white and clean the dark page of our account, and reconciled us to God. There is the centre of our religion. But how pitiful are my words! I may perhaps make men understand what we think, yet I can never quite make them sympathize with what we feel. The holy and righteous God, the dreadful guilt and uncleanness of sin, the wonder of God's grace in the gift of our Saviour Jesus Christ, the entrance through

Christ into the very house of God, the new birth by the power of God's Spirit, the communion with the risen and ascended Lord through His Holy Spirit present in the Christian's heart — these are the convictions upon which rest our very lives.

If these convictions are false, they must be given up. But so long as we think them true we must act in accord with them, and it is morally wrong to ask us to do otherwise. At this point appears the profoundly unethical character of most of the proposals for Church union that are being made at the present day. The right way to combat us who call ourselves evangelical Christians is to combat honestly and openly our central convictions as to God and sin and redemption, not to ask us to hold those convictions and then act contrary to them. So long as we think as we do, we cannot, if we love our fellow men, allow them, so far as our testimony is concerned, to remain satisfied with the coldness of what we regard as a baseless and fatal optimism. We must endeavor, by the preaching of the law of God and of the gospel of His love, to bring them into the warmth and joy of the household of faith.

THE ETERNAL GOODNESS

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Rufus Matthew Jones was born in Maine in 1863, graduated from Haverford College in 1885, and studied in the universities of Heidelberg, Oxford, Marburg, and Harvard. Since 1893 he has been first instructor, then associate professor, and finally professor of philosophy in Haverford College, and at various times editor of the *Friends' Review* and *The American Friend*.

Of his many books none is more delightful than *A Boy's Religion from Memory*, with its glimpse of a happy-hearted lad growing up in a quaint old Quaker home. His *Studies in Mystical Religion* make him an authority in that radiant field of research. He is also the great historian of Quakerism, in a series of volumes covering its different periods. In such books as *Social Law in the Spiritual World*, *Spiritual Energies in Daily Life*, and *The Church's Debt to Heretics*, to name no others, he is a popular interpreter of practical mysticism.

The *London Times* said recently that Rufus Jones is the greatest spiritual philosopher living in America since William James died. It is a high tribute, alike to his literary art and his spiritual understanding. One feels in the following essay the touch of a gracious personality, and the impress of the Quaker tradition of purity and earnestness, which has added a grace of depth and serenity to American life and literature.

THE ETERNAL GOODNESS

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It is impossible for me to tell how I think of God without first giving a brief review of the way in which I think of the universe, of man, of the development of history and literature, and especially of the supreme event of history, the life of Christ. No interpretation of God can be of much value to anyone unless it considers Him in connection with the world and its intellectual and spiritual problems, and at the same time in intimate relation with our own inward life and its outward historical setting. And surely no thought of God can be adequate which is not closely linked up with the most revealing Life the world has ever seen.

In the first place, I think of the universe, not as a dull, dead, mechanical thing, but rather, when it is viewed in its deepest nature, as something spiritual. This does not mean that matter can be reduced to spirit. It is too soon to talk with assurance about the nature of matter. Nobody knows what it will turn out to be, and consequently we must wait for more light. But in any case, whenever we view the

universe in its upward sweep it turns out to be an unfolding, a significant, a dramatic, movement. To think of this age-long upward trend as a fortuitous blind stagger is too excessively absurd. It has come from somewhere, it means something, and it acts as though it were going somewhere. It is an amazingly complicated series, but it has been moving in one general direction, from lower stages to higher. It is charged and loaded throughout with an organizing tendency of ever increasing complexity. New and unpredictable forms of organization on new and ever higher levels have emerged, raising the entire cosmic process from a mere circular and recurrent movement to a spiral and upward-climbing one.

At the simplest and most primitive stage, there must have existed at least that framework without which no one can think of even the beginning of a universe, namely space and time, or what are now thought of as the four dimensions of space-time. How matter emerged out of space into visibility, nobody knows, but that would be the first step forward; and the next was from matter in its simplest atomic structure to matter in its more complex organizations. Every movement of matter appears to conform to and be controlled by the laws and principles of mathematics. Not an atom curves anywhere in the immense universe that does not obey

geometry, and the presence of mathematics everywhere is one of the things which we must explain.

Then at the next stage, though its origin is so far unexplored, life emerged. Here entered an entirely new type of organization, new and undreamed-of capacities, and at the same time something loaded with *a forward urge and a tendency to vary and produce unique forms*. Then through these living forms consciousness emerged; and at the culminating level — as we know it — personal self-consciousness emerged. On these higher stages of life, where we ourselves now camp, there emerge or break through what we are accustomed to call spiritual values, such as beauty, love, truth, dedication, goodness, holiness. The universe has produced these glorious things as certainly as it has produced pig iron and potash. It must be the kind of universe which could produce what it has produced — and that means a spiritual universe.

For my second ground, I find man, in his deepest fundamental nature, to be a spiritual being. He is often enough, no doubt, mean and sinful, frivolous and foolish. But when you find the real citadel of man's being it is a holy place, very near to God. Those laws and principles of mathematics which control the forms and movements of the universe are laws of our own mind, inevitable principles by which we do our thinking. These values, too, which

the universe reveals, beauty, truth, love, and goodness, are the very things by which we live, the very stuff and fibre of our souls. Then, furthermore, we are forever haunted by something beyond ourselves. There seems to be a sense of eternity, of infinity, felt within ourselves. Nothing finite satisfies us; no achievement, no attainment ever seems adequate. There is always a "more yet" stretching on beyond our grasp. There is a beyond not only outside us and above us; there is, as well, a beyond within us. We always carry a ladder with us. We transcend whatever we are. We are no more capable of bounding ourselves than we are of bounding the sky. We are forever ourselves *plus*, and the plus is the main fact. Here lie many of our tragedies; but at the same time this glory of the imperfect, this glory of going on, is a noble inheritance, not from flesh and blood but from Spirit.

This is not all that is to be said about our inner nature. Sometimes there come "through the soul's east window of divine surprise," at least to some of us, inrushes, incursions of larger life and power. We feel ourselves in contact with a deeper Life, a wider world within. We seem to touch a hidden Source of Energy and to draw upon springs of vital Power. These mystical experiences are not rare and abnormal. They are quite common; and they seem to those who have them to be as normal as the

flooding of the lungs with air. There in the lungs we bring the red corpuscles of the blood into vital contact with the oxygen of the universe; and so, it seems to those who feel invaded, the tiny individual soul is being flooded, vitalized, and fortified by the spiritual energies of the world within.

History — I mean of course the historical process rather than the written story — is a progressive and dramatic movement. It is, to be sure, not always onward. Sometimes there have been side currents or back eddies, but on the whole there has been a steady trend from lower to higher levels. It has revealed a moral and spiritual development. Harsh and brutal systems slowly give place to gentler ones. The stars in their courses have all along fought against Sisera and his kind. The way of the transgressor has proved to be not only difficult, but impossible. The universe is against it. When all the returns are in, the transgressor is defeated — he cannot pass. What is good has, like Jacob in the story, been chosen, and what is evil has, like Esau, been rejected. Ideals are always being tried out at the judgment seat of history, and in the long run the fittest ideals survive and prevail. The slow moral gains of the ages are saved and accumulated and a steady addition is made to the precious stock.

The greatest permanent contribution to the moral and spiritual stock of the world is the supreme

literature which the best races have produced. This, together with the noblest art and music, which I must here fuse together as a single contribution, is an unending divine revelation. It comes from the Deep and it speaks to that which is deepest in man. The great poet, as Lowell once said, speaks to the age out of eternity. Here the lonely soul finds a great cloud of witnesses bearing testimony to infinite values and eternal realities. The method of literature is different from that of logic or science, yet its authority and persuasiveness are not less but rather greater than the authority and persuasiveness of logic and science. This testimony of genius reaches its summit and apex in the writings of the Old and New Testaments, which may well be called the literature of the Spirit. It is the clearest proclamation there is of the Eternal Spirit working in and through the temporal, of an intelligent Pilot steering the entire process of things.

But we want to know that at the heart of things there is love and tenderness, that Someone cares, takes sides; is with us in our stress and strain and agony, yes, suffers with us in our sin and waywardness; is a Friend, a Father, a Lover of our souls. A God like that has broken through into our world and revealed Himself in Christ, in a human Face like ours, in a personal Life which touches our lives at every point. He tallies with what is highest and

best in us, and He at the same time makes us feel condemned when we live for low and miserable aims that end in self.

Only through a personal Life like that could a God be revealed who would meet all our needs and be completely adequate for us as the Life, the Truth, and the Way. Mathematics can be revealed — and is revealed, as we have seen — in a world of matter and mechanism. Beauty can be revealed — and is everywhere revealed — in the world of outer nature; in stars and flowers and dewdrops. But Love can be revealed only in a person with a free and inner life. Justice and moral judgment can be vindicated through historical events. But the spirit of tender patience and of sacrificial sympathy can come only through a personal life and character. Abstract love and theoretical sympathy count for nothing — they are only words. Love, to be love at all, must have the warmth and intimacy of a personal heart that feels and wills and understands. We can take account of energies only where they are concretely organized in some form of matter. We can study life only in concrete types of living things. We can find a God of Love only in some concrete Person who is divine enough to reveal such perfect traits of character and human enough to be identified with us. All that and more we find in Christ.

These are some of the grounds in the world around me which make me sure of God. I find the most convincing evidences of Him, not in wind or fire or earthquake, but in the quiet testimony of beauty, truth, love, goodness, peace, joy, self-sacrifice, and consecration, which point to another kind of world within the one we see and touch — a world of Spirit, of Intelligence, of Order, of Organizing Power, a realm which reveals ideals of Goodness.

I think of God, therefore, not as a Being who occupies space, not as seated on a throne in the sky, nor as working like an architect or builder, using external tools and building-stuff. I think of Him as Spirit — which does not mean something vague, vapory and ghostlike. We know spirit best in our own inner selves. It is what we *are*. It is our intelligence, our aspiration, our ideals, our love of beauty, truth, and goodness, our persistent character, our true nature — all we mean when we say, I am; I will; I love. If we hope to find a real God, we must discover that we have a real soul, a spiritual nature which directs and dominates us. If we do not believe that there is something spiritual in our own selves, we shall never really believe that there is something spiritual in our larger universe. Different persons will have different estimates of what is the highest aspect of our inner spiritual life. Some will say knowledge, some will say love, some will say

appreciation of beauty. Others will emphasize worship, or reverence for duty, or loyalty, or personal devotion. But we shall all agree, I think, that our inner life, with its aspirations, hopes, and joys, coheres and unites to form a single personal self and always looks out beyond itself in ideal directions. That seems to be the very heart and essence of a spiritual life — to be unified, to be personal, and to live beyond any given expression of the self.

When I think of God as Spirit, then, I think of Him as the Ground and Source of all that we can call mind or reason in the universe. All the laws and stable principles, all the permanent form and order of the world spring from His Mind, are the operations of His Reason. Beauty, truth, love, and goodness, again, can belong only to a mind. They are not things, chunks of matter, dead material stuff. They involve and imply attitudes, intentions, appreciations, preferences, ideals, which can exist only where there is a Mind to have them. Obliterate mind, and with it goes all that makes our universe either real or a place where a being like one of us could endure to live — since all the things we live by are things which belong to a mind and spirit.

It is no accident that wherever we point the telescope we see beauty, that wherever we look with the microscope there we find beauty. It beats in through every nook and cranny of the mighty world,

"in the choir of heaven and the furniture of earth." Truth, too, is not something capricious and accidental. It is not an occasional visitant. The solid frame and structure of the whole system of things speak unvarying truth. They do what they promise to do. There is no lie in the entire cosmos. Even its wildest comets follow curves that are true and calculable. They come back when they say they will come back, and here they are on the fraction of a second. Every atom of oxygen is true to every atom of hydrogen. They always make the right response when they meet. In Orion, as here in Haverford, the shortest distance between two points is a straight line. It will continue to be so as long as mind is mind. But obliterate Mind and presto, the universe would be totally insane!

But not everything in the universe is God. We shall never find Him by addition. He is not the sum of things, not a vast Pan — All-There-Is. There are things here that ought not to be here. There are things here which must be negated, conquered, and put down. Some things are good, some things are bad, and some things are on the way to be good. God is that intelligent Spirit who is accomplishing the good. It is a long, slow, patient task, but on the whole it is going forward; it is getting done. He stands for goodness as completely as He stands for beauty and truth. It must

be created, it must be won, it must be conquered. It cannot be ready made.

Goodness is possible only in a world of contrasts, only in a world where some things are better than other things are. It is possible, too, only where there is a Mind that has a preference, only where there is a Mind that can feel the meaning of "rather"; only where there are ideals. God, to be God, must transcend what is. He must be the maker of what ought to be. He must be leaving the old behind and going on to the new. He must be a forward-moving Spirit, an idealizing Mind. He must be the maker of goals, the creator of onward trails, the builder of unattained purposes, the seer of far-off divine events. He lives as Spirit and moves as Creative Energy, and realizes that which is always better than the present best.

"The Lord thy God, he will go over before thee" is one of the great sayings of Deuteronomy. God is just that: He is the One that goes on before. Each stage of the creative process prepares for the next. Each epoch of history is a forerunner of a coming epoch. Life is a burgeoning thing, always opening out in new and unpredicted ways, always concealing mysteries, and always revealing the unique. God is a God of surprise and wonder, just because He is Father of the unborn and Maker of the unmade. Every day is a creative day; every

moment the Spirit of God broods over the unformed and breathes breath and life and power into that which is coming forth. Even death may well be only one of His ways forward into fuller life.

I think, then, of God as Spirit and as the ideal-making Mind of the universe.

But can we pray to such vastness and immensity? Can we have communion and fellowship with such a mighty inclusive Spirit, that binds not only the Pleiades but all the myriad worlds into one coherent whole, and that is the present tense of all the eternal years? Well, that God whose Mind is the foundation of all law and order in the universe, and the ground of all spiritual values wherever they emerge in any world, has revealed His Heart and Character to us in a concrete personal life like our own. He has broken through into manifestation, as electricity does when it finds a transmissive instrument, as consciousness does when it finds an organ which can express it. Here at a temporal focus-point of history there came One through whose Life the essential nature of this spiritual God could break forth and give us light and guidance. He no longer seems remote and awesome with His immensities. He is near and simple and tender. He no longer seems vague and abstract. He is a Person with a mind and heart and will. He is touched by every human need. He is quick to feel and understand the human

heart. He loves and suffers. He forgives and pardons. He reveals a new way of life, a new spirit, a new type of person, a new redemptive power, a new victory over death and sin. He shows that grace is superior to justice, that love conquers hate, that life is lord of death, that self-giving, not sovereignty, is the mark and badge of the Divine Nature.

I think of God, then, as like Christ. When I turn to Him, He seems no far-away, sky-hidden Deity. He seems to me warm and tender, full of grace and truth, as infinite as the sweep of the universe, but as personal and loving as the Galilean Friend of men.

Speak to Him thou, for He hears, and Spirit with Spirit can
meet —
Closer is He than breathing, and nearer than hands and feet.

IMAGO DEI

RICHARD ROBERTS, D.D.

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Richard Roberts is a Welshman by birth, a mystic in his faith, and an analytical realist in his thought; he always gives one the impression of a man who has wrestled with the questions which fever men, but waited till the fevers were past. Educated in his native land, he went from a notable pastorate in London to the Church of the Pilgrims in Brooklyn, and thence to the great pulpit of the American Church of Montreal.

The books by which Dr. Roberts is best known in America are: *That One Face*, a study of Jesus as reflected in the minds of poets and prophets; his searching critique of modern life in the light of the mind of Jesus, in *The Untried Door;* and *The Gospel at Corinth*, one of the best examples of the art of expository preaching in our time — an art, alas, now well-nigh lost in America. One also remembers *The Ascending Life*, a little book in which he brings intellect to the service of the devotional life.

The following essay shows us a penetrating spiritual intelligence dealing with the supreme Reality; and if it makes us think of the saying of Patmore, that "in divinity and love what 's best worth saying can't be said," it does help us to a clearer vision of the Eternal Word made flesh in the Life that interprets life.

IMAGO DEI

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"No man hath seen God at any time"; and when men speak and think of God they have need of an image, a symbol. That God is, I do not pause to argue. When a man professes to have ceased to believe in God, it generally turns out that he has not at all ceased to believe in God, but that he has discarded his grandfather's description of God, and that he has provided himself with an alternative, which is usually a vague generalization such as "Life-force," "Infinite Continuum," "First Cause," "Stream of tendency that makes for righteousness." Something there must be back of this vast sum of things — x, an unknown quantity; and, from the beginning, men of a reflective turn of mind have found themselves compelled to try to find a value for this x. But, as x is invisible and intangible, we express this value in a symbol; and since we must draw our symbols from this concrete world of time and space, our symbols are, for the most part, images or dramatizations of human functions and human relationships.

Men have had dealings with Something or Somebody, unseen and unknown, and they have dramatized these relationships as the intercourse of King and subject, or of Judge and culprit, or of Father and child. This, we are sometimes told, is anthropomorphism; and no doubt it is. But is this anything against it? It only means that we are trying to express the significance of something which is as yet beyond us in terms that are within our reach. We cannot pretend that they are adequate or final; they are only the best that we can conceive. In any case, I think that all thought of God or of an invisible universe, if it is to issue in action, must be anthropomorphic. On some higher plane of evolution we may outgrow this necessity, but here and now we can do no other.

Saint Paul said long ago that the world through its wisdom knew not God; and the saying is still true. Speculative philosophy is no nearer an answer to its question than it was in ancient Greece; and, if Bergson is right in saying that the intellect was fashioned for the uses of life in a material world, it is not likely that it will find the answer. The best it can do for us is to give us the specifications of a conception of God. It can infer, from its contemplation of the world, certain things which must be true about God; but any construction it may make out of its specifications will be a vast abstraction,

which may have an academic interest but cannot make much difference to the rest of us. As I see it, the best thought of our time leads us to the idea of a transcendent-immanent, eternally self-perfecting Absolute; and as, on analysis, this statement is found to be chock-full of logical contradictions, it is difficult for us to get our minds around it. This does not mean that it is not true; it means only that we cannot now grasp it. On a higher plane of evolution it may seem quite simple and obvious to us. Now we know only in part.

Yet it remains true that, for the fruitful conduct of life, we must needs find and hold some view of the nature of reality. For what we think of the ultimate reality will determine the kind of people we are and the kind of lives we shall lead. It is true, to be sure, that for some people the kind of life they want to live determines the kind of God they choose to believe in; they make their God on their own image: "Thou thoughtest that I was altogether such an one as thyself." To Omar Khayyam He was a Good Fellow. But, beyond a doubt, what a person or a people thinks God to be will have a profound influence on the life and conduct of either; and it becomes urgent that we should arrive at a working faith concerning the nature of God, which we shall accept as true for us here and now, even though we may have to admit that it is not complete or final.

Now, there is one region in which we may hopefully look for light. The characteristic modern emphasis upon "values" has opened a door of inquiry which promises to be fruitful. Let us then first consider what the word means. The biologist will tell us that a certain animal habit has had survival-value — by which he means that that habit has helped that animal to survive in the process of natural selection. But evolution has been concerned with more than mere survival. It has steadily tended toward the refinement, the elaboration, the qualitative improvement of life. So we reach a conception of a higher grade of values — perhaps of a hierarchy of values reaching its summit in what we may call the ultimate values. Obviously, the ultimate values for us are the characters of those activities and states in and through which we reach and enjoy the height and the fullness of life; and it is for us more hopeful to seek out the nature of Reality in a study of these ultimate values than in any other direction. Edward Caird speaks of God as "a self-determining Principle manifested in a development which includes both nature and man"; and if we are to accept, as we surely must, the logic of evolution, we shall infer most clearly what God intends, and therefore, what He is, from those values which we discover in experience to lead to the height of life.

It is, of course, important to keep in mind that, when we speak of ultimate values, we mean the highest values *we* know. We are not necessarily — or even probably — the last term of the evolutionary process. Already there are adumbrations of a super-manhood; and it is implied in the New Testament distinction between nature and super-nature, between the "living soul" and the "life-giving spirit."

The data of this study of value are to be sought in the region that we call history, the term being broadly interpreted to cover all human activity. Not that we can wholly ignore biology, of which, speaking strictly, history is a part; but history is a record of the conscious effort of man, which man may with confidence interpret. Moreover, in the long perspective of biological time all history is modern history; the most ancient is quite recent. There are six thousand years of it more or less, while, according to Sir Arthur Keith, man reached what may be called the human standard of brain a million years ago. So Abraham and Plato are relatively our contemporaries, and the nineteen hundred years that separate us from Jesus are a mere trifle. Man to-day may be better and finer in some ways than he was when he first began to evolve a culture and to record what we call his history, but he is not essentially different.

If, then, we are to speak of God as Edward Caird does, we shall naturally look for His self-manifestation in history; yet, at first sight, the last thing that history suggests is that it is a manifestation of a God with whom we would care to have anything to do. It would be difficult to trace in it any orderly development; and that mankind should have been capable of the Great War after so long an experience of the self-defeating folly of war, is not reassuring evidence of a continuing evolution. But this impression is largely due to the undue place that the public and political event has occupied in the minds of chroniclers. The truer history is chiefly unrecorded, for it consists of the love and labor of the innumerable company of obscure and anonymous folk who have carried the burden of life from one generation to another, and of whom we catch hardly more than an occasional glimpse through the thick murk of war and intrigue which fills the pages of the historians, and which affects but a small minority of mankind. It is when this obscure life irrupts rudely into the *haute politique* of the mighty, with its uprisings and revolutions, that history begins to seem real.

But the history which is to show us the self-manifestation of God in a development which includes man is the history that tells us how men acquired wisdom and knowledge; how they learned

to live with one another; how they grew to admire and to aspire toward goodness, truth, and beauty. It is the history of man's discovery and culture of his spirit; and of that we are not likely to find much in the political and public records. We have to turn rather to the quiet places where men have lived and loved, thought and wrought faithfully, in obedience to some intuition which told them what the things are that are best worth living for. Our search will take us to schools rather than to parliaments, to wheatfields rather than to battlefields, to workshops rather than to throne rooms, to cottages rather than to castles. Most of our conventional history is the record of man's failure to be a man, a chronicle of the beast in man. There is a history too of the spiritual achievement of man, but because this has not been spectacular it has gone for the most part unrecorded.

There is one passage in the history of the obscure which has come to be regarded as the most important episode in all history, though it made but the smallest dent upon the face of formal contemporary history. Anatole France's story of Pontius Pilate, grown old and obese, taking his summer cure, and failing to recall the Crucifixion, probably represents the measure of the event in the perspective of Roman imperial politics. But, for some reason, that event has turned out to be — to use justly a word commonly

used with too much levity — epoch-making; and it has been taken by a large portion of mankind as conveying a revelation of the Divine Nature. It has this curious quality: though we say it happened at a certain time in a certain place, we know that that is the least thing which we say about it. We seem to be aware that we are raised above the world of events in time and place into the world of values. The fact grows into a symbol; the act becomes a revelation. For here, if anywhere, we find something like absolute moral distinctions. In our greatest human crises the issue is never wholly clear. Our conflicts are between different shades of gray. But here on Calvary is a small clearing where black meets white and midday midnight, with no blurred edges and no twilight zone.

It is immaterial to this argument whether the story of the Crucifixion is even a correct record; it is enough that this story as given in the Christian tradition has gained the currency and acceptance it has had, and that ever since a growing multitude of people have found it saying something which they find self-authenticating and ultimate. This must mean that the event and its issue have become symbolical of a permanent crisis and conflict in human life, and that they force a choice upon man and upon human society. The story itself seems to have a deliberately symbolical intention, for in the dramatis

personæ are three figures who, standing over against Jesus, represent the main ingredients of the secular human situation. There is Barabbas, the revolutionary leader, the man who represented the policy of national emancipation by violence — that ancient illusion of opposing force to force, by which this poor race of ours has been fooled and undone throughout its history. To this party Jesus seems to have addressed some of His most important public teaching. It was they whom He warned so insistently against hatred and violence, knowing such things to be self-defeating.

As a foil to Barabbas, we have the somewhat less significant figure of Pilate, who nevertheless represented the same general principle. Barabbas and Pilate might be enemies, but they belonged to the same moral camp. The second figure is Caiaphas, who represented the principle of vested interests, symbol of the people who are entrenched in their privileges, the die-hards who will never cease to oppose any change in a status quo which works out to their advantage.

The third salient figure is Herod, who, though he plays a minor part in the public proceedings, is nevertheless a sinister presence on the stage. His historical immortality rests precisely upon his standing as a symbol of self-indulgence and moral corruption.

Over against these three, Jesus. Add to the

picture the mob, and the essential cast is complete. From the nature of the case, the issue was inevitable.

And the universal and super-historic quality of the event lies chiefly in this: that this world of violence, vested interests, and vice is still with us. We have to-day the same atavistic faith in and the use of force, the same self-indulgence and moral corruption, the same vested interests in Church and State and market place; and, as of old, the vested interests know how to mobilize the herd for their own profit. And over against these, Jesus still on the Cross. Calvary would seem to be the moral crisis of the world, focused down to one terrific apocalypse.

The essential quality of Jesus is revealed in His prayer: "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do." In this prayer Jesus was fulfilling the logic of His own teaching. "Courage in strife," said Mr. H. M. Tomlinson in a recent article, "is common enough; even the dogs have it. But the courage which can face the ultimate defeat of a life of good will and yet crave forgiveness for a wild and angry mob because ignorance has no light, that is different, that is victory, if that fine word has any meaning at all." To have given himself to a great enterprise of love, to be resisted all the way and frustrated time and again, but still to go on without bitterness, and then to suffer final defeat, yet in that hour to keep love unspotted and undiminished —

that is the height of life. And we cannot be wrong in acknowledging this perfect victory of love to be the moral *C major* of the race. Not long ago the conscience of Christendom acclaimed another saying that belongs to the same universe, the saying by which Nurse Cavell's name became immortal, but which, significantly enough, the powers that be forgot to engrave on her statue in London.

If, then, we think of God as "a self-determining principle which manifests itself in a development which includes man," quite apart from any formal doctrine of the Person of Christ, we are so far right in discovering that manifestation in the moral quality and achievement of Jesus, and in that which in ourselves endorses and endeavors to imitate it. Love, then, we may at least say is the ultimate value for us.

The use of the word Love, however, involves us in some difficulty because of the wide variety of its uses and especially of exotic and sentimental debasements of it. If we trace the evolution of life from its first beginnings, we shall find two principles at work — one a principle which manifested itself in the production of individual units of life, and the other a principle which gathered these units together and out of them brought forth a new, larger, and more elaborate unit. To begin with, we have the single cell, like the amœba; then we have the multicellular organism; and all the way upward we can

find this interplay in various forms. We have it in the ant and the ant hill, the bee and the beehive, and at last we have the human individual and human society. Right through the whole effort and activity of life these two principles are at work, the principle of individualism and the principle of association; and of the first, the highest term is the impulse toward freedom, and of the second, the impulse to love. These two belong organically to one another, for there is no perfect freedom except in a universe of love, and there is no love at all where there is no freedom. We are made free in order that we may love. It may be demonstrated beyond a doubt that on this human plane love is the law and the prophets, and the gospel as well.

Mr. Trotter, in his book, *The Herd Instinct in Peace and War*, tells us that "Nature has been hinting to man through the incalculable ages of his existence as a social animal, that 'altruism' must become the ultimate sanction of his moral code." And altruism he defines as "the capacity to assimilate the interests of another individual with one's own, to allow him, as it were, to partake in one's own personality." That may stand as a definition of what we are here calling love. It is the true "human nature," not yet fully realized. In the New Testament it figures as the spontaneous and characteristic outgoing of the spirit, whether in God or in

man. It is not illegitimate to think of it as the single and — for us — final value, in which goodness, truth, and beauty cohere. For we may, without undue tension of speech, speak of Goodness as Love in conduct; of Truth as Love in thought; of Beauty as Love in self-expression, in whatever medium. It is set over against those other values which derive from "this world's unspiritual God" — power, privilege, self-indulgence (whether of vanity or of sense), and which now, as always, are in unholy alliance against it. It would appear to be true that the enemies of life are they of its own household, for the lust of power, the arrogance of privilege, and self-indulgence are themselves manifestations of life; but beyond this is the more reassuring truth that, despite all these perversions of life which make for death, life is struggling to the realization of itself in perfect love.

Well, if it be true that life is struggling to realize itself in perfect love, then that is what God *means*, and so what God Himself is. But to say that God is love is nevertheless to say something that is both hard to believe and harder to conceive. It is hard to believe, because of the existence of so many things which are incongruous with love. That is due partly to our failure to see the implications of love, such as, for instance, that love requires a state

of freedom, and that freedom involves the possibility of anarchy and self-indulgence. Even the love of God requires the taking of risks; and the risk of creaturely freedom was one of them. The difficulty is also in part due to the intractable mystery which surrounds the tragedy of life. Why has the path of development been always strewn with casualties and miscarriages? Why, if God is Love, did He choose this costly way of reaching His inscrutable ends? We may find some mitigation of the harshness of this dilemma by reflecting that our tragedy is the discipline of our ultimate divinity. The groaning and travailing of the creation are the birth pangs of the Sons of God. We may add to this mitigation that since God Himself is involved in the process, He also shares its tragedy. Do what we will, there is at the end a still unanswered question.

But that there is a lacuna here does not require me to discard the general conclusion. And in this view I am fortified by the conviction that the conception of God as Love seems to me to leave fewer and lesser questions unanswered than any alternative hypothesis.

The difficulty of conceiving of God as Love is the common difficulty of conceiving abstract ideas and qualities. Mark Rutherford says that our minds with their present furniture are incapable of conceiving "forever" adequately. "Directly we try to

consider it, to follow it out, we feel distinctly a kind of break." And it is so under whatever form we endeavor to conceive the "infinite continuum" in which "all things consist." Professor Eddington speaks of the unknown content which runs through the universe and "which must surely be the stuff of our own consciousness." The remark has a warm and reassuring sound, but when one tries to sense its significance it wholly escapes. One's mind fails to grasp it crisply and to put it in a communicable form. The philosopher may be able to leave it there, but the rest of us cannot. We may think of God as infinite, but we cannot do with Him as indefinite. And infinite love is an idea too abstract for daily use.

Ernest Renan once said that the proper vehicle for philosophical ideas was the drama; and the true drama is always that. *Coriolanus* and *Julius Cæsar*, he says, are "not pictures of Roman customs, but studies in an eternal psychology." I do not remember whether in his *Vie de Jésus* Renan points out how spontaneously and consistently the greatest of all religious teachers turned to the dramatic form in order to express His own intuitions and discoveries in the deep things of God. In our highbrow conceit we have been apt to think of the parables of Jesus as a mode of conveying spiritual truth to rude and primitive minds, assigning them tacitly to the same

category as the old-fashioned cautionary tales that were told to children. "Truth embodied in a tale," we have quoted with a slight accent of condescension, "may enter in at lowly doors." But that we think and speak in that fashion means only that we have failed to grasp the parables. The parable of the Prodigal Son is a dramatization of the unyielding, yearning Love of God for His wayward creatures; and it tells the mystery of our redemption as no disquisition on the Atonement can. (It is interesting to observe how frequently, in grave discursive theological exposition, the Atonement has been dramatized under the form of legal, judicial, or commercial transaction.) The parable of the Hidden Treasure is a dramatization of that critical experience in which a man breaks through the crust of sense, and in a high transfiguring moment sees and grasps eternal reality and knows that life has no more to offer him. In a hundred living vignettes — the Pearls before Swine, the Leaven and the Meal, the Obdurate Judge, the Unfinished Tower, the Fisher of Men, and the like, Jesus tells us truth that no discursive prose of however fine a texture could carry so convincingly. A dry-as-dust commentator will explain all this by saying that it is a habit of the Semitic mind; and none may read, say, Doughty's *Arabia Deserta* without realizing that the Semitic mind is indeed very rich in this faculty. But we

err if we suppose it to be a gift inferior to our habit of ponderous prose. If Renan is right, it is a better gift than ours, and for speaking of the weightier matters of life, more fruitful.

In our thought and speech of the Everlasting Love, we must needs dramatize it. Though what we see is no more than a little fragment of the whole, it is even then more than can be cast into a single image. The image of the Father is, as Jesus Himself once suggested, inadequate. The best fatherhood we know is but a pale suggestion of the Divine. "If ye, then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your Father which is in heaven . . . ?" Fatherhood is an image which suggests origination and affection, providence and protection; but it is notorious that it fails to cover the whole ground of the human need and experience of God. Sometimes one comes across a suggestion that a doctrine of the Motherhood of God is needed to supplement that of the Fatherhood, and it is possible that the place of the Virgin in the Roman system corresponds to the same feeling. It is significant that while the religious consciousness has given to man a father, it has given to God a mother. Yet our salvation must here lie not in a few authoritative images but rather in the multitude of images; and some we have ready to hand — the Shepherd who goes in search of the lost sheep, the

Lord of the Harvest, the King who would make a reckoning with his servants; and images too of a more modern origin, such as the Hound of Heaven. It would appear on the whole that those images are likely to be truer which reflect an organic relationship within the sphere of life, though one may not deny the elements of truth in such an image as that of the Architect of the Universe.

When I come, for myself, to define what most satisfies my sense of what is the fullest truth concerning God, I inevitably come to the figure of Jesus. He appears to me to have embodied in His own Person that ultimate value of love which expresses itself in goodness, truth, and beauty, far more completely than any other historical person that I have knowledge of. His background gave His teaching a predominantly ethical bias, and He tells by word of mouth little concerning the intellectual and less concerning the æsthetic elements in life. Yet there was truth and beauty in His word and deed no less than goodness. None has ever spoken so directly to our condition and in words so self-authenticating; and the beauty is there not as a deliberate decoration, but as a natural presence. To me it seems, in spite of His fragmentary history, to be the fullest expression that I know of "that self-determining principle which manifests itself in a development which includes nature and man."

At last then, for me, God is Jesus writ large. And while this leaves me with questions still unanswered, I find, by acting upon this presumption, that I have a gospel which turns out to be essentially true to the nature of things.

WHAT GOD MEANS TO ME

ALBERT F. GILMORE

EDITOR OF CHRISTIAN SCIENCE PERIODICALS

Albert Field Gilmore was born in Maine, graduated from Bates College in 1892, and after five years of teaching became associated with the American Book Company, 1897–1917. For four years First Reader in the First Church of Christ, Scientist, Brooklyn, he is now editor of the Christian Science periodicals other than the *Monitor*, and in 1922 became President of the Mother Church, Boston. He is an ardent bird-lover, having written two books of exploration in bird-land, *Birds through the Year* and *Birds of Field, Forest, and Park*.

Christian Science is one of the most extraordinary religious phenomena of modern times, and a testimony to the vital need of mysticism in the life of to-day. Its secret is in its vision of God as the All-Good, the All-Real, the All-Loving, and in its technique of realization, whereby the love and power of God are demonstrated to be real and workable in everyday life, lifting men and women out of the fear that stands in weakness into the faith that walks in power. Out of his own experience Dr. Gilmore has written of the faith in which he has found the key to the meaning and joy of life.

WHAT GOD MEANS TO ME

ALBERT F. GILMORE

EDITOR OF CHRISTIAN SCIENCE PERIODICALS

My concept or idea of God is the outgrowth of my study and practice of Christian Science. Formerly God seemed indefinite, afar off; but through the light which Christian Science has shed upon the Bible, God has come to be a loving presence, ever available to meet my need. Consequently this article sets forth my concept of God as gained through the study of the Bible and the textbook, *Science and Health with Key to the Scriptures*, by Mary Baker Eddy, and the practice of the teachings contained therein.

Through this experience God has been revealed to me as the loving Father, who loves all His children with ineffable, unchanging love. The word "Father" was frequently on the lips of Christ Jesus, and he frequently sought divine aid through prayer to the Father. His words, "My Father," "Your Father," "Our Father," leave us in no doubt as to the Master's concept of God as the Father of all, and of the intimate relation between God the Father and His perfect creature, man. God thus becomes the intimate

Friend, the close companion, of all who look to Him with understanding. John's assertion, "God is love," precisely characterizes God's nature. "'God is Love.' More than this we cannot ask, higher we cannot look, farther we cannot go." [1] Writing of spiritual man, God's image and likeness, Mrs. Eddy says, "Spirit is his primitive and ultimate source of being; God is his Father, and Life is the law of his being." [2]

All the beautiful qualities which the child sees in his earthly father have their source in God, the divine Father, since all good emanates from Him. Strength, love, mercy, justice, kindness inhere in God, the perfect Father, forever sustaining His spiritual offspring, man. What, — one may ask, — are mortals the children of this perfect Father? Is God the Father of mortal man? Do John's words, "Now are we the sons of God," [3] relate to mortals? Christian Science answers these queries emphatically, and the answer involves our concept of God. God is Love, Truth, Life, Spirit, Mind, Soul, Principle; and God's creation is the expression or reflection of His divine nature. Therefore man, as God's offspring, expresses no quality underived from Him, nothing unlike the divine. A moment's reflection convinces one that man as the image of infinite Spirit is not the fleshly mortal whom we commonly

[1] *Science and Health*, p. 6. [2] *Ibid.*, p. 63. [3] I John, III: 2.

call man. Hence God is not the creator of mortals. No more is He the creator of the so-called material universe. God is the creator, then, of the true man, His spiritual and perfect offspring, and of the spiritual universe. Manifestly, it was not of Love's offspring that Jesus spoke when he told a group of Jews: "Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him." [1] Not of God's image, spiritual man, but of the counterfeit were these words spoken.

What burdens are lifted, what fears dispelled, what discords overcome by the knowledge of God as Father, who is divine Love, infinite, hence ever-present, the only real presence, possessed of all power and of all wisdom! Understanding God thus, how completely may we turn to Him to comfort us in times of stress, to calm our fears, and to guide and direct our paths. With this concept of God, how easily may we obey the injunction of James, "Draw nigh unto God, and he will draw nigh to you." [2] In fact, man is never apart from the divine presence, which is infinite. Moreover, may we not be assured that infinite Love never caused sin or suffering, disease or discord, want or sorrow? We conclude, then, that the myriad of ills which seem so thickly to

[1] John, VIII: 44. [2] James, IV: 8.

beset human experience do not come from God. Infinite Love can know nothing unlike love.

"The Christian Science God is universal, eternal, divine Love, which changeth not and causeth no evil, disease nor death." [1] This concept of God, the Father, as perfect Love, brings a sweet sense of peace and security, a sense so assured that Mrs. Eddy could write: "My heavenly Father will never leave me comfortless, in the amplitude of His love; coming nearer in my need, more tenderly to save and bless." [2] As we catch even a glimpse of this great fact, many sayings of the Bible which involve the concept of Deity as the loving Father are made clear. "Underneath are the everlasting arms" [3] brings the comfort and blessed assurance which soothe our troubled thoughts. God's promise, "I will restore health unto thee, and I will heal thee of thy wounds," [4] becomes a demonstrable fact, possible of complete proof. "It is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom" [5] stimulates the expectancy of good from infinite Love, the divine source of all good.

What but divine Love could have saved Daniel from the ferocity of the lions, preserved the Hebrew captives in the fiery furnace, struck the shackles from the imprisoned Peter, even opening the gates of his

[1] *Science and Health*, p. 140. [2] *Miscellaneous Writings*, p. 249.
[3] Deuteronomy, xxxiii: 27. [4] Jeremiah, xxx: 17.
[5] Luke, xii: 32.

prison? What but omnipotent and all-inclusive Love sustained Christ Jesus in the hour of his great need, and brought him triumphant through the belief of death? The understanding of God as Love heals hate and all its attendant circumstances; reveals the brotherhood of man as a divine fact; makes possible the overcoming of every belief which would undertake to present man as separate from God; and destroys error of every form. What place can evil have in a universe where divine Love is the cause, creator, and sustainer — the only presence? More is involved in this concept of Deity than tongue can tell or pen record, for it deals with Love's infinite universe, with God's perfect kingdom, with perfect God and perfect man.

Moreover, since the qualities of motherhood as well as of fatherhood inhere in the infinite Godhead, the teachings of Christian Science reveal God to me as both Father and Mother. The tenderness, patience, loving-kindness, mercy, gentleness, compassion, devotion, forgiveness, which are so commonly associated with the concept of mother, have their source in the infinite Father-Mother, the abiding place of all good, the fountain of all true existence. These qualities belong to God, from whom emanate only the divine attributes which express God's loving nature. How reassuring the thought that man as God's offspring is always and

forever the object of the tender and loving solicitude of the infinite Father-Mother, in whom, in the words of Paul, "we live, and move, and have our being." [1] In the light of this understanding, what becomes of the troubled questionings which so often beset human experience? What chilling fear, what constricting doubt, what corroding worry can withstand the knowledge that divine Love, the infinite and ever-present Father-Mother, God, is ready at hand to dispel the darkness of mortal experience with the all-pervading light of love?

God, the Father, divine Love, is therefore the healer of my fears, the destroyer of my doubts. How this sublime fact can be made practical in everyday experience, Christian Science sets forth so simply that all who will may learn and apply it; and through daily application of this spiritual truth is found in some degree "the peace of God which passeth all understanding." [2]

The means by which this blessed experience may become ours is prayer. "True prayer is not asking God for love, it is learning to love, and to include all mankind in one affection. Prayer is the utilization of the love wherewith He loves us." [3] Then as we learn truly to love our fellow men, to include all in the range of our affection, we are using the love with

[1] Acts, xvii: 28. [2] Philippians, iv: 7.
[3] *No and Yes*, by Mrs. Eddy, p. 39.

which God loves us. Can one doubt that blessings follow such experience? Hate, envy, malice, the beliefs of sin and sickness, cannot enter thoughts filled with love. Such can have no existence in the presence of infinite Love.

God is also something other than this. God is divine Mind. Nothing less than divine intelligence could create an infinite universe, governed by perfect law; and such intelligence could belong only to an infinite Mind. Divine Mind expresses itself in its perfect ideas, which constitute the true creation. "All is infinite Mind and its infinite manifestation, for God is All-in-all."[1] This idea of God denies the possibility of a material creation as the true creation. Thus in God, who is divine Mind, I find the source of all true ideas, of all good thoughts, which come to comfort and strengthen me. The "still small voice" of Truth reaches us when, intent upon the receipt of a divine message, we still the senses and listen for His voice. God's ideas are the angel visitants which reach us as we gain glimpses of Truth; and they guide and direct our ways, if we but heed their blessed message. Mrs. Eddy defines angels thus: "Angels: God's thoughts passing to man; spiritual intuitions, pure and perfect; the inspiration of goodness, purity, and immortality, counteracting all evil, sensuality, and mortality."[2] All thoughts, then, which are

[1] *Science and Health*, p. 468. [2] *Ibid.*, p. 581.

truly good come from God, who thus becomes to us the source of all right thinking. Christ Jesus recognized this divine source. His words, "For it shall be given you in that same hour what ye shall speak," [1] turn the disciple to God as the fountain of inspired truth.

This coming of God's messengers is not a supernatural experience, but the divinely natural unfoldment in consciousness of the good which comes from the infinite God, who is all good. James assured us, "Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning." [2] As we recognize this, looking to God, the source of all good, the fountain of our faith, we open wider and ever wider the channels of love through which God's blessings are manifest.

This experience partakes in no degree of mysticism; it is the opposite of the occult and mysterious. It is, rather, the most real of all experiences, as it is the most important. "Detach sense from the body, or matter, which is only a form of human belief, and you may learn the meaning of God, or good, and the nature of the immutable and immortal. Breaking away from the mutations of time and sense, you will neither lose the solid objects and ends of life nor your own identity." [3]

[1] Matthew, x: 19. [2] James, i: 17. [3] *Science and Health*, p. 261.

And again we read: "The individuality of man is no less tangible because it is spiritual and because his life is not at the mercy of matter." [1] Divine ideas, God's messages to man, as revealed in Christian Science, are transforming human thought from a material to a spiritual basis, a process whereby materiality, changeable and uncertain, disappears, and in its place come glimpses of spiritual reality and of God's perfect love for man. Thus are we learning that matter is unreal; that Spirit alone is the immutable, the eternal, the indestructible. God has already bestowed upon us infinite blessings, which become manifest to us as our thoughts are purified and spiritualized. Through purified thought we behold God as the understandable, unchangeable, eternal Holy One.

The real, spiritual man, as God's image, reflects divine intelligence. Man, therefore, is not subject to the limitations with which mortals commonly surround themselves. Even a glimpse of this fact greatly increases our ability to express and be governed by the all-inclusive Mind, which makes no mistakes. Man thus guided can never go astray.

Furthermore, God, the loving and intelligent Father, must be the self-existent Being. He is the source of all existence, eternal Life. Jesus declared, "For as the Father hath life in himself; so hath he

[1] *Science and Health*, p. 317.

given to the Son to have life in himself." [1] Likewise, God has given to all His offspring to have life in themselves, since He is Life, the source of all existence. "Life is without beginning and without end. Eternity, not time, expresses the thought of Life, and time is no part of eternity. . . . Life is neither in nor of matter. . . . Life is not limited. Death and finiteness are unknown to Life. If Life ever had a beginning, it would also have an ending." [2] But what of human experience with its material conditions which seem both to begin and to end? Is God responsible for this? Since God is Life, Life is infinite, and the only real existence emanates from Him. Thus man expresses divine Life; and mortal existence, arising from a false sense of existence, from the material dream of life apart from God, has, therefore, no place in God's plan. These truths accepted and lived are the means whereby to obey Paul's injunction to put off "the old man," the man of material beliefs, and put on "the new man," God's likeness, which stands revealed as the perfect man. "Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect" [3] thus becomes a practical injunction, pointing to the necessity of recognizing one's true self as the perfect child of God.

I also conceive God to be Spirit. Christ Jesus'

[1] John, v: 26.

[2] *Science and Health*, pp. 468, 469.

[3] Matt., v: 48.

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declaration that "God is a Spirit" [1] — or "God is Spirit," as later translators express it — assumes a new significance in the light of Christian Science. Spirit is substance, "that which is eternal and incapable of discord and decay." [2] Spirit is the opposite of matter, and being infinite, it denies the possibility of a material universe as real — that is, as created by God or supported by Him. This understanding denies the reality of the material universe, which in consequence has only a supposed existence, with no basis in reality.

God possesses unlimited spiritual qualities, which are reflected by man, and which mortals may understand and utilize as they come to know God better. God becomes the healer of our diseases, the destroyer of our woes, as we gain the right understanding of Him. God's promise to heal "all thy diseases" was not lightly made, and, like all of God's promises, it is fully kept.

Whatever is inharmonious in our experience, whatever fails to conform with our highest sense of good, whatever is wrong and partakes of evil, is corrected through the gaining of spiritual understanding, that is, knowledge of God. Solomon displayed great wisdom when he prayed for an understanding heart; for only through the understanding of God and His perfect universe, including man, do we gain freedom

[1] John, IV: 24. [2] *Science and Health*, p. 268.

from mortal limitations, win salvation and the kingdom of heaven, the state of consciousness wherein we shall awake in His likeness — that is, see God as He is. "Jesus beheld in Science the perfect man, who appeared to him where sinning mortal man appears to mortals. In this perfect man the Saviour saw God's own likeness, and this correct view of man healed the sick." [1]

What inexpressible joy attends the gaining of the understanding of God which reveals Him as the creator only of the spiritual universe! The flesh-weariness of mortal experience falls off in the light of this blessed truth, and we rise in the strength of Spirit to the experience of man's perfect selfhood as the child of God.

John's stirring declaration, "Now are we the sons of God," [2] could by no possibility have pertained to the material sense of man; for since when did God create a creature so unlike Himself as material man? In similar vision do we behold the reality of being, of man's true sonship — that is, man's perfect, unchangeable, and eternal selfhood. Something of the tremendous significance of the gaining of spiritual understanding is found in Jesus' familiar statement, as recorded in the gospel of John: "This is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent." [3] To

[1] *Science and Health*, pp. 476, 477. [2] I John, III: 2. [3] John, XVII: 3.

know God is eternal Life. Then, by beginning here and now to understand God and His creation, we may begin at once, here and now, to gain eternal Life. As we become conscious of God as Life, we demonstrate immortality. Mrs. Eddy has wonderfully repeated this fact in a single sentence: "Not death, but the understanding of Life, makes man immortal." [1] Mankind dies not into immortality; but, rather, in order to demonstrate immortality, the belief of death must be overcome through gaining the true sense of Life.

This understanding destroys both the belief that death is a necessity and that it is the gateway to eternal Life. Although Paul declared, "The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death," [2] the process of overcoming may be begun at once. Eternal Life is now; and in proportion to our understanding of Life, we shall express it. Now are we builders in eternity.

God is no less the forgiver of sins than the healer of disease. "We acknowledge God's forgiveness of sin in the destruction of sin and the spiritual understanding that casts out evil as unreal. But the belief in sin is punished so long as the belief lasts." [3] Sin, like disease, has no abiding place in the divine Mind, which is the only true consciousness; hence

[1] *Science and Health*, p. 485. [2] I Corinthians, xv: 26.
[3] *Science and Health*, p. 497.

sin has no reality as fact. The belief in sin, like the belief in disease, arises from accepting as real a creation other than God's creation, the perfect universe of divine ideas; and sin is corrected (destroyed) by knowing the truth about it — that is to say, by knowing its unreality. A lie is destroyed by knowing the truth which the lie misrepresents.

Thus spiritual understanding becomes the perfect antidote for the belief of sin, exposing its utter falsity and destroying it. Let us not forget, however, that sin is punished so long as it seems to us to possess even a semblance of reality. The belief of pleasure in sinful pursuits cannot be indulged with impunity on the ground that, sin being unreal, the indulgence of sinful pleasure is of no consequence, because it is likewise unreal. Mrs. Eddy's teaching is perfectly clear on this point. "A sinner can receive no encouragement from the fact that Science demonstrates the unreality of evil, for the sinner would make a reality of sin — would make that real which is unreal, and thus heap up 'wrath against the day of wrath.'" [1] Thus God, the healer of all our diseases, is likewise the redeemer from all sin.

How important that I should acquaint myself with God, since thereby is gained the understanding of my own sonship with Him. As I progressively understand God, progressively do harmony and

[1] *Science and Health*, p. 339.

well-being become my experience. The infinite Father-Mother can scarcely do less than maintain His perfect idea in continuous, perpetual harmony. To abide in the assurance of God's loving care, to know that He is infinite and good and ever at hand, the only power and the only presence, embracing nothing evil, temporal, or erroneous, comforts the doubting heart, gives strength for the daily tasks, inspires with courage to face the problems of life, brings sweet accord and blessed peace. Through knowledge of God there comes progressively within my present range of experience the eternal harmony of the infinite Mind, into which the seeming discords of life do not enter.

A STRUGGLING GOD

JOHN HAYNES HOLMES

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John Haynes Holmes was born in Philadelphia in 1879, educated at Harvard, and ordained to the Unitarian ministry in 1904. Since 1907 he has been minister of the Church of the Messiah, New York City, which in 1917 he reorganized as the Community Church. As a preacher, as editor of *Unity*, as publicist and author, he has exercised a stimulating ministry, winning for himself a unique place in American religious life.

The first book by Dr. Holmes was entitled *The Revolutionary Function of the Modern Church*, and it set the key for all the rest, among which one may name *New Wars for Old*, *Religion for To-day*, *Is Violence the Way Out?* and *New Churches for Old*. A leader of radical thought, both economic and religious, he is master of a vivid and lucid literary style — a power of luminous statement which has added greatly to his influence as a teacher.

The conception of God set forth in the following essay was popularized by Rolland, Wells, Shaw, and other literary theologians, and in philosophy by Bergson. The writer interprets it as the logical, if not inevitable, thought of God by those who hold the evolutionary view of life and the universe, the while he emphasizes its religious value and appeal.

A STRUGGLING GOD

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THE traditional idea of God is familiar. It is that of a perfect God who was the maker and is now the ruler of a perfect world. God, the Creator, is perfect in the sense that he is infinite, eternal, omnipotent, omniscient — the possessor of all those supreme qualities which make up the essence of divine being. The world, his creation, is perfect in the sense that it is a final thing, a piece of work that is complete. "The heavens and the earth were finished," says the narrative in Genesis. There was nothing more to do, nothing to add or take away or change, when God had "ended his work which he had made." What the world is to-day it was at the moment when it came from the hand of God, and so it will remain to the end of time. And why not, if God is all-wise and all-powerful, and this world a specimen of his divine handiwork? God knew what he wanted to do, and he had the power to do it. It is therefore inevitable, is it not, that Creator and creation should alike be perfect?

This conception of God and his world endured just

so long as the deductive or theological method of thought endured. All through the Middle Ages men had the intellectual habit of postulating certain abstract ideas about the deity, affirming these abstractions as articles of faith, and then forcing the facts of life to fit the ideas. Theology was a kind of Procrustes' bed which reality was twisted and tortured into fitting. In modern times, however, the process of thought has been reversed. The deductive or theological method has yielded to the inductive or scientific method, which means that we begin our thinking not with dogmatic, absolutist hypotheses about God, but with practical observation and experience in the present world. We gather facts, and then base upon these facts such assumptions about God and the mysteries of ultimate being as the facts may seem to warrant. We move, in other words, in the formulation of our thought, from the known to the unknown, instead of from the unknown to the known. We fit Procrustes' bed to the occupant, instead of the occupant to the bed.

The great and triumphant achievement of scientific thought in our day is the discovery of evolution. The moment that men turned away from abstract speculation about absolutes to concrete observations of phenomena, they began to see that there was something wrong with this idea of a world made all at once, and existing unaltered through the centuries.

Everywhere on this planet are abundant evidences not of stability but of change. Thus, as we dig down into the soil, we find a succession of layers of earth, each distinct and separate from every other, yet all combining to reveal an unbroken series of progressive transformations. Hidden away in these geological deposits are fossil remains of flora and fauna long since extinct, and many of them related by direct lines of descent to living organisms. In man himself are vestiges of an earlier day, — gill marks in the neck, atrophied muscles of ear and tail, rudimentary organs such as the tonsils and vermiform appendix, — all of which reveal the lower ranges of organic life from which the human race has sprung. The human embryo reveals itself as a living recapitulation of animal forms from the lowest to the highest. The world and its inhabitants constitute no stable and final creation. On the contrary, they are constantly changing, old forms passing into new, new forms in turn becoming old. "All organized beings," says Henri Bergson, "from the humblest to the highest, from the first origins of life to the time in which we are . . . do but evidence a single impulsion. . . . The animal takes its stand on the plant, man bestrides animality, and the whole of humanity is one immense army galloping beside and before and behind each of us in an overwhelming charge." [1]

[1] *Creative Evolution.*

The discovery of this law of evolution has done, or rather is doing, two things. It is breaking down our traditional idea of a perfect creation; and it is breaking down as well our traditional idea of a perfect Creator.

The change in our conception of the cosmos is familiar, and accepted of all intelligent and instructed minds. No longer do we think of the world as called miraculously into being by divine fiat, and standing unchanged in its perfection to this day. Rather do we think of it as undergoing a prolonged and unending development from a primal seed of life into the multifarious forms which the ages have seen and must yet see. Our whole idea of the universe is no longer that of a product of manufacture but of a process of growth. The picture is not that of an article designed and put together by an artificer and at one amazing moment finished, but rather that of an organism, unfolding, expanding, and therefore never complete. John Fiske described the change in our point of view when he said that "Paley's simile of the watch . . . must be replaced by the simile of the flower. The universe is not a machine but an organism with an indwelling principle of life. It was not made, but it has grown," [1] — "first the blade, then the ear, after that the full corn in the ear."

[1] *The Idea of God.*

This change in our conception of God and his world marks "the greatest revolution," says John Fiske, "that has ever taken place in human thinking." It is to be noted, however, that while this change revolutionized our thought of the cosmic process, it did not, in the beginning at least, alter our thought of God at all. The concept of divine reality which had always been present in men's minds, remained the same. It was true that God was conceived as substituting the method of growth for the method of fiat in the fulfillment of his creative purpose. It was true that he had finished nothing — that the completion of his task was before him in the future rather than behind him in the past. Especially true was it that God took on definitely the character of immanence rather than transcendence. No longer an artificer far separated from the world which he had made, — Carlyle's "absentee deity," — he was now an indwelling spirit of life, a "Power manifested in every pulsation of the universe." But God was still regarded as infinite and eternal. He was all-good, all-wise, all-powerful. He was himself perfection, and was working out in the evolving world a process of perfection. This process was incomplete, of course, but it had been planned from the beginning, foreseen to the end, and was now being systematically carried through. In the divine mind, if not in the world itself, the process was already finished. In

idea, if not in form, the creative purpose had been attained. The universe might be changing, but in God himself was "no variableness, neither shadow of turning."

For a full generation and more this reconciliation of an unchanging God with a changing world-order was accepted as satisfactory. Then came the inevitable question as to whether the principle of evolution did not apply to the Creator as well as to his creation, to noumena as well as to phenomena. Further study of the facts of life stirred the question as to whether it *must* not so apply. For the universe was soon discovered to be imperfect, in the sense not merely of being incomplete in form but also of being inefficient, even evil, in process. Thus the development of life was seen to involve a waste that was appalling — the sacrifice of a million lives that one life might survive and be advantaged. Furthermore, there was cruelty in this waste — the slaughter went on with what seemed to be a maximum instead of a minimum of pain. Again, when all the waste and agony were done, there was no perfect result to justify so extravagant and wanton a method of procedure. There was ugliness in the world; there were errors and futilities; there were lines of progress which were left unfinished, blind alleys explored only to be abandoned, experiments undertaken only to be neglected or cast aside. Instead of a process

moving on by precise methods to sure and beneficent results, we see a process characterized by waste and cruelty, and an end of the process that is always uncertain, oftentimes unlovely, not seldom a failure. Is this the work or expression of a perfect deity? Is an all-powerful, all-wise, all-merciful God the responsible agent in this business? "Suppose we had only the facts [of evolution] to go upon," writes Edmund H. Reeman. "Suppose we had never heard a word about the old God-views of theology. Do you think we should ever have depicted God to ourselves . . . in terms of an almighty ruler?" [1]

It is this challenge which has led to the breakdown of the traditional idea of God. The old problem of evil, as pointed by the inductive method of science and loaded with the data of evolution, has made at last untenable the citadel of the old theology. Men are applying to-day to the problems of spiritual reality the same scientific rigor which they have long since learned to apply to the problems of natural phenomena. They are refusing to accept hypotheses and dogmas because they sound well, or feel inspiring, or seem to fit some preconceived ideal of the deity. They are asking to-day about God just as they have long since asked about the cosmos: What are the facts, how far do the facts take us, what may we rationally believe in the light of the facts? And they

[1] *Do We Need a New Idea of God?*

are answering, with utter composure, that we cannot say of God the things which men have said so confidently hitherto. God may be infinite and eternal; he may be able to think and do everything. But we have no right to assert this, or even to assume it, upon the basis of such evidence as is now available. And we cannot stretch this evidence beyond itself. So far as we can judge from the divine handiwork, God is not infinite, certainly not omnipotent. All available facts would seem to prove the truth of the statement of William James, that "God is finite either in power or in knowledge, or in both at once." [1]

The theological picture here presented is that of an evolving God to match the scientific picture of an evolving world. The two conceptions belong together. The universe, in both its material and spiritual aspects, is either all static or all dynamic; it cannot be half one and half the other. At the heart of the idea of God is the thought of Life, with its essential attribute of self-expression. The evolution of the world is the endeavor of Life to express itself and thus work out the inherent destinies of its being. The story of this evolution is the story of the successes and failures of this process of self-development from the unconscious to the conscious, from instinct to reason, from homogeneity to heterogeneity, from the blind groping of the amœba to the

[1] *A Pluralistic Universe.*

clear purpose of the mature man. Through all these æons of development, God (Life) has never at any time been master of his task. He has never been able to do what he wanted to do; he has never seen his purpose through to the end. "God does not know everything," says Maeterlinck, "and never has known everything." [1] His life, like the life of every personality, has been a process of self-education to knowledge, of self-discipline to attainment. Always God has been struggling — failing and beginning again, falling and rising again. A million times has he been halted, turned aside, defeated. But always, by virtue of that essential divinity which makes him God, he has resumed his work, and at last, with the wider knowledge and deeper experience which his very effort has brought him, has achieved the master work of Man. "Life," says Bergson, "appears as a wave which rises, and which is opposed by the descending movement of matter. . . . At one point alone it passes freely, dragging with it the obstacle which will weigh on its progress but will not stop it. At this point is humanity." [2]

So God has wrestled with his world, and is still wrestling. So God and his world have evolved together, and are still evolving in a mutual process of creation. God is not the source of evolution, or even the guide of evolution. He *is* Evolution. For God

[1] *Mountain Paths.* [2] *Creative Evolution.*

is Life, and life is change and growth. This idea of God seems strange, yet it is only itself an evolution out of well-established ideas which have preceded it. First we had the static idea of *creation* — God and his world, both fixed, immutable. Then we had a mingling of the static and the dynamic in the idea of *evolutionary creation* — a fixed God producing a changing world. Now we have the full dynamic in the idea of *creative evolution* — a changing God fulfilling himself in the changing processes of life.

This doctrine of creative evolution marks an impressive gain in thought. Thus it gives a much sounder interpretation of the phenomena of the natural world than the classic evolutionary doctrine of Darwin, Spencer, and Fiske. With growth, of course, there must be imperfection, incompletion; but why waste, futility, misdirection, failure? If God is infinite and knows exactly what he wants to do, why such experimentation and wreckage? The old theology gives us no answer except mystery. But the conception of God growing with his world, as the sculptor grows in skill and knowledge with his statue, makes everything plain. Evolution is the record of God's adventures in creation, glorious not so much for the material things achieved as for the spiritual triumphs won.

In the same way this idea of an evolving God gives answer to the much more general problem of evil.

At last the riddle has been solved. God is not omnipotent; he is limited either in knowledge or in power, or, as James suggests, "in both at once." Evil is here in the world, not because God wants or uses it here, but because he knows not how at the moment to remove it; or, knowing, has not the skill or power to achieve his end. Evil, therefore, is a fact not to be explained away, but to be accepted; and accepted not to be endured, but to be conquered. It is a challenge neither to our reason nor to our patience, but to our courage. For the first time we discover that evil is real and yet not necessary, a phenomenon fortuitous and transient. Some day, as God grows in knowledge and power, evil will be overcome. The future is certain to be delivered of all ill; and in an evolving world it is the future which is alone important.

Here are gains, to be sure. But are there no losses as well? Does not this curious thought of a finite and struggling God spell the bankruptcy of religion? What is left us, as worshipers, if God is not omnipotent — if he can give us no certain answer to our prayers, no sure protection from our ills? Have not men clung to the idea of deity just because they have needed refuge and strength? Have they not turned to God because he can promise them comfort, assurance, inspiration, guidance, uplift? A Providence

above, "the everlasting arms" beneath — this is what God has meant to men; and if this is now taken away by any process of ratiocination, however well founded in reality, what remains of what we call religion? A few questions are answered perhaps, a closer coördination established logically between fact and faith. But what spiritual recompense do these things bring to the believing heart?

There is much cogency in this appeal from intellectual to moral values. Man craves indeed the companionship, the sympathy, the support of the divine; his heart is hungry and must be satisfied. But wherein does this thought of an evolving God touch in any way this spiritual need? Is it in the power of God — the sheer brute strength of the divine arm, if I may so express it — that man finds his consolation and his hope? On the contrary, has not the thought of God in every age, as voiced by the bravest prophets and the wisest seers, been focused upon the idea not of power but of love? "God is love!" — this has been the triumph cry. God cares! — this has been the consoling faith. And the care of God, the love of God, has no more to do with this question of infinitude and omnipotence than the soul of man has to do with the muscles of his chest or the corrugations of his brain. Does God know everything? Why ask? To stretch knowledge to omniscience brings God no nearer as a

Providence of good. Can God do everything? What does it matter? To stretch power to omnipotence does not deepen the love for which we yearn and without which we cannot live. The essential thing is that "love of God" from which "neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come . . . shall be able to separate us," and this is as sure in the new idea of God as in the old.

Nay, it is surer — and also lovelier! For in the old idea there was an aloofness about God that was awesome and repellent. His attributes of infinity — omniscience, omnipotence, and the rest — removed him far from us, so that we could feel no intimacy of presence. This God was a king to be obeyed, not a companion to be loved; he was a majesty to be adored, not a fellowship to be enjoyed. Especially was this deity sufficient unto himself; he had no need of us. We might live or die, prosper or perish — it was all the same to him and his divine purpose. But in this finite God who struggles as we struggle and suffers as we suffer, who knows not only power and victory but defeat and disappointment and much weariness, who is faced as we are faced by the hazard of failure after long agonies of endeavor, we find a being like unto ourselves. Here is a "fellow laborer," as Paul so brilliantly suggested. He can help us — *and we can help him!* His purposes must

be fulfilled through us. Man is necessary to God, in other words, just as God is necessary to man. In this mutual necessity is our kinship, a kinship so close and inevitable that God and man become as one. God is man, and man is God, each the other, and both the Life that is struggling and battling through to Love.

Such is God — not power, but love; not the goal, but the road; not the victory, but the great adventure! "Now it follows very directly from [this] conception of God," says H. G. Wells, ". . . that we who have realized him and given ourselves joyfully to him, must needs be equally ready and willing to give our energies to the task we share with him, to do our utmost to increase order and clearness, to fight against indolence, waste, disorder, cruelty, vice, and every form of his and our enemy, death, first and chiefest in ourselves but also in all mankind, and to bring about the establishment of his real and visible kingdom throughout the world. . . . Self-transformation into a citizen of God's kingdom and a new realization of all earthly politics as no more than the struggle to define and achieve the kingdom of God in the earth, follow on, without any need for a fresh spiritual impulse, from the moment when God and the believer meet and clasp one another." [1]

[1] *God the Invisible King.*

HOW I THINK OF GOD

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Scholar, teacher, preacher, executive, Henry Sloane Coffin is a many-sided man and holds a commanding position in the religious life of America, having recently been chosen president of the Union Theological Seminary, New York. The Madison Avenue Presbyterian Church of New York, of which he has long been pastor, is one of the finest examples of "organized preaching" in the country, uniting the ends of society as few churches have been able to do.

Dr. Coffin is a New Yorker, born in 1877, a son of two of the old and great families of the city. After graduating from Yale University, he studied in New College, Edinburgh, at Marburg in Germany, and at the Union Theological Seminary, where he has been professor of practical theology for many years. He is a member of the Corporation of Yale University, and of the National Board of Missions of the Presbyterian Church. He was lecturer on the Beecher Foundation at Yale in 1918.

Among the books by Dr. Coffin are: *The Ten Commandments*, sermons on *The Creed of Jesus*, studies in *Christian Convictions*, and *What Is There in Religion?* — one of the most helpful and suggestive books of recent years, especially to those who are perplexed in matters of faith. In the essay following he speaks frankly of his deepest confidences in a manner to captivate and convince, showing how the Christian faith may be united with the new knowledge.

HOW I THINK OF GOD

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GOD is to me that creative Force, behind and in the universe, who manifests Himself as energy, as life, as order, as beauty, as thought, as conscience, as love, and who is self-revealed supremely in the creative Person of Jesus of Nazareth, and operative in all Jesus-like movements in the world to-day.

In the physical universe I see Him as energy — the energy of whirling electrons which compose light, and which build up the planets, of which our earth is one. I see Him in upsurging life, which assumes innumerable forms in plants and creatures, forms that change in adaptation to changing conditions. And in this vast and unceasing outflow of energy and life I see Him in universally present order and beauty. Electrons disclose a law of their being, and science makes the assumption of faith that everywhere everything is intelligible and methodical. Were the universe capricious, it could neither be known nor depended on. But it is inherently systematic, and belief in this regularity is the faith which underlies all our scientific investigation. The "laws of nature"

which we discover and formulate are our descriptions of the ways in which we find that God consistently works. Further, energy and life assume lovely forms — witness the crystals in a snowflake and the shapes and colors of plants. This beauty may be due to our perceptive senses, but it also seems to inhere in the objective world, where nature eliminates the ugly as monstrosities and establishes the fair. Poets, artists, and musicians, who are "priests of the wonder and bloom of the world," are to me interpreters of God, who is Beauty, as well as Energy, Life, and Order.

In plants and animals there is a rudimentary intellectual and moral life — the life of instinct. In that upreaching mind I see God, but God imprisoned and craving more complete self-expression. In man, so closely linked with the subhuman creation and the heir of the long history and development of life through myriads of forms during millions of years, I see God in thought and conscience and affection, God revealing Himself as Truth to be known, as Right to be obeyed, as Love to be trusted. Wherever a man's intelligence is persuaded, there I think of God as touching him and claiming his allegiance. Wherever a man's conscience is laid hold on, there I think of God as in contact with him and demanding his loyalty. Wherever a man's heart is appealed to, there I think of God as present and asking his

service. So I think of God as indwelling in men, and able to reveal more of Himself through them by so much as humanity exceeds the infra-human creation.

Looking back across the ages, one sees man, from his most primitive days until now, aware of a Presence in the world, whom he has variously conceived: now as a host of spirits inhabiting trees and stones and clouds, now as gods presiding over tribes or ruling some region of the universe or sphere of human life (the sea or the thunder, childbirth or war or death), and again as the one Lord of earth and heaven, or the one all-pervasive Spirit of life. Amid these kaleidoscopically changing conceptions of Deity, there abides the sense of the Unseen as akin to man, and so to be wooed by him as an ally. And to man's various approaches to the Invisible there has always been a response sufficient not only to afford present satisfaction but also to whet his desire for more. Out of every generation men witness that in fellowship with One beyond their sight or touch or hearing they find something of supremest worth. The spiritual results which they itemize in various epochs differ; but there is a body of concordant testimony to the refreshment and power and cleansing and illumination and serenity which are gained in communion with the Divine.

Of all these seekers after God, He who seems to have found most and best in Him is Jesus of

Nazareth. What He Himself was and said and did He attributed to this unseen Presence whom He called Father and Lord, and of whom He thought as controlling the universe and inspiring His own soul. To thousands in the Christian centuries Jesus has communicated His faith. God is to them the response from the unseen which answers the trust of Jesus, or the self-revealing Father who imaged Himself fully in this dutiful and companionable Son. As one who was brought up in Christian surroundings, who from infancy learned prayers and hymns and the Bible, I caught the faith of the Church. God is for me the Father who unveils Himself in Jesus. It is of God so conceived that I think in all my intercourse with the Unseen. It is this Christ-like Father to whom I pray, on whom I depend for reenforcement and guidance, of whom I think as forgiving my sins and prompting every generous and useful impulse and resolve within me. He is the Spirit manifest in the energy and life and order and beauty of the universe, and in the thought and conscience and love of men, who comes to full self-expression in the Man Christ Jesus.

I think of God as essentially self-imparting. He puts Himself into His universe at every stage in its evolution. But, like all artists, the medium in which He works limits the amount of His possible self-utterance. He expresses as much of Himself through

the inanimate creation as it can manifest; but it cannot embody His conscience and heart. He expresses as much of Himself through mankind at every stage in human history as He can succeed in inducing them to receive and incarnate in their personal and social life. But men have never shown themselves fully obedient to the truth which they acknowledged or entirely responsive to the right which they recognized. Only One has seemed completely to understand and accord with His purpose; and in Jesus God has expressed Himself fully. To me Jesus is the adequate picture of God's character.

I try never to think of God as inharmonious with the mind of Jesus. If there be much in the ways of the brute creation which seems unchristian, I interpret it as not yet completed after God's heart and as waiting for Christians to subdue it nearer to their own and their Father's desire. As scientists assume that the world is to be understood and mastered to serve the needs of humanity, so Christians assume that anything in the universe which is hostile or indifferent to the purpose of Jesus is to be conquered and brought under the sway of His Spirit. I do not read God's character in cosmic happenings or charge Him with the results of human greed and folly. I see His character in Jesus, and believe it is His purpose that the forces of nature and the wills of men

should be made to accord with the aims for which Jesus lived and died and ever liveth.

My thought of God is defined in Jesus, but it is not confined to what I see in Him. I do not think of God as doing aught that is incongruous with Jesus; He deals with men as Jesus dealt with those whom we meet on the pages of the Gospels; He forgives and empowers, redeems and selects as did Jesus. He suffers with and for His children, as Jesus suffered with and for His brethren. But there is more in God than can be incarnated in any human life. The whole universe is pervaded and controlled by Him; the entire race of men is begotten of Him and reflects something of His image. Every religion has its message of God, and can contribute elements to the fellowship of men with Him. Science, art, ethics, philosophy, all bring their discoveries of God as the True, the Beautiful, and the Good. God is to me Christlike and more — the Spirit who rules and fills this and all worlds.

Is God a person? I prefer to put it that He has personal relations with us. Personality is the loftiest product of the world's evolution, and it would be degrading to God to conceive Him in subpersonal terms. We do not wish to lower God to our level or restrict Him within our limitations, and personality as we know it is only embryonic. We men are tadpoles of persons. Further, we cannot

conceive a Person who is also the immanent Spirit of the universe, and we posit more in God than the phrase "a person" connotes. Christian thinkers in their doctrine of the Trinity often attribute to God social relations within His selfhood. But the finest religious experience of the race, and supremely the faith of Jesus, discloses a God who has intercourse with His children which we can only describe as personal.

I have so stressed the revelation of God in Jesus that one may ask: Do you think of Jesus as Himself God, or as a man to whom God was fully disclosed? I answer that to me He is both. I grant that it is difficult to combine these two aspects of Jesus — that in which we envisage Him as man, made in all points like ourselves, whose faith discovers God, and that in which we picture Him as coming from God and embodying Him. At the moment physicists are facing a similar difficulty in defining light. They have thought of it as waves of energy which move through a hypothetical ether — "the nominative of the verb, to undulate." But recently they have discovered that light exerts a pressure which can be weighed, and they are computing the tons of sunshine per annum which our earth receives. They are working with both the undulatory and the emission theories of light, but without successfully combining them. The theological problem is similar.

As in the undulatory theory of light, God is that Spirit who responds with inspirations and reënforcements to the faith of Jesus, across the medium which interlies the here and the yonder. As in the emission theory, God is that Spirit who comes in Jesus with the pressure of His love upon our world's woe and sin.

And while I have stressed the full self-disclosure of God in Jesus, I do not think of Him as having nothing more to impart. On the contrary, I think of Him as the indwelling Spirit who has ever been revealing Himself to faithful souls; and that Spirit is the Spirit of Christ. I commenced by saying that God is to me a creative Force. A force can be seen only in action: the Spirit of Christ can be watched in operation — in a Paul, counting all things but loss that he may be found in Christ and present others perfect in Him; in an Augustine, putting off the sensual life and devoting his powers to building up the City of God; in a Francis of Assisi, espousing poverty and claiming glad kinship as a child of God with sun and moon, beasts and birds, and with every man to whom he can minister the happiness of obedience to Jesus; in a Luther, discovering that a Christian is the most free lord of all and subject to none, and the servant of all, bound to be to them what Christ has been to him; in a Lincoln, with malice toward none, with charity for

all, with firmness in the right as God gave him to see the right, setting free the bondmen and preserving the unity of a nation; in an Edith Cavell, finding that patriotism is not enough, and that she must die without hatred or bitterness for anyone. In all Jesus-like movements in current thought and life, in the trend toward coöperative fellowship in industry, toward a commonwealth of free nations, maintaining peace and promoting human well-being, toward a comradeship of mutual reverence and mutual help of the races — in every advance in science and art and commerce and education I think of God as imparting more of Himself to the sons of men. He is to me the Living God, a Contemporary, unveiling Himself to His children in the life of each generation, and recognizable as the present Spirit of Christ.

WHAT GOD IS

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A Canadian, born in 1877, educated at McMaster and Chicago Universities, Douglas Clyde Macintosh was ordained to the Baptist ministry in 1907. Since 1916 he has been Dwight professor of theology in the Yale Divinity School, and chairman of the department of religion of the Yale Graduate School. During a part of the World War he served as chaplain, with the rank of captain, in the Canadian army until 1918, when he transferred his service to the A.E.F., in France and Belgium.

Of the writings of Dr. Macintosh, the best known are *Theology as an Empirical Science*, issued in 1919, and *The Reasonableness of Christianity* — the last being the Bross Prize volume for 1925, parts of which also served as the Taylor Lectures at the Yale Convocation in the same year. It is an example of the new apologetic, building up from a basis of religious meliorism and moral optimism, and finding in the Christian religion the most authentic and satisfying justification for such an adventure.

The essay following is one of the most valuable in the series, alike in delimiting and expounding its thesis, which asks and attempts to answer the profoundest and most searching question involved in the spiritual faith of man, namely: Is the God within us one with the God who moves the sun and all the stars?

WHAT GOD IS

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ARE the cosmic God and the God of inner religious experience two different Gods, or are they one and the same? What we propose to do here is to set forth a number of what seem to be religiously valid aspects of Deity, and then to inquire how far these various aspects may be brought together in a unitary idea of God. We shall be concerned primarily with the question as to *what God is;* only secondarily and somewhat incidentally shall we seek to show *that God is.*

Our first statement will be negative. No physical thing, organic or inorganic, is God. Neither is the sum total of all physical things God. In other words, what we mean by the term "God" is something different from each and every physical thing, whether taken separately or all together as the physical universe.

Neither my real self nor my ideal self is God. However intimately God may be related to me, God is God and I am I. My real self is not ideal, and my ideal self is a fiction; whatever may be true of it at some time in the future, at present it does not exist.

No other human person, historic or contemporary, is God. Neither are all human persons, past, present, and future, taken together as "humanity," God. Humanity is to be served, not worshiped; it is not even necessarily to be obeyed. Moreover, all humanity is together dependent upon an Other.

No mere idea in man's mind is God. Not even the God-idea is God, any more than a starving man's idea of bread is bread. No idea, as such, nor any other abstraction, is God. Neither is the totality of human ideals God. Not all ideals are valid. Even at the most, ideals, as such, are validities, not realities; meanings, not existences. They are not what is, but only what ought to be.

Let us come now to positive statements. We shall deal first with cosmic aspects of Deity. When we speak of God we mean something which, while not a physical thing or human person, we take to be at least as real as any physical thing or human person. We give a part, though only a part, of the definition of the term God when we say that to be God means to be real — that is, absolutely real, an absolute Reality.

What is meant by the term God is the Supreme Power in reality, that upon which we are all ultimately dependent. Such a power undoubtedly exists; we cannot escape the consciousness of our ultimate dependence. However certain it may be

that, as free moral agents, we have a measure of independence, we are all aware of the fact that this independence is limited; we know that we are not absolutely independent, but that ultimately we are absolutely dependent. That, then, with reference to which we are absolutely dependent is what we mean by God, however much or little, beyond this bare fact of existence, we may know about this God. Whether it be one or many, personal or impersonal, good, bad, or indifferent, there is Something upon which ultimately we are absolutely dependent. Obviously, too, this object of our absolute dependence is in some sense cosmic; if not just the universe, it must be a Power intimately related to the universe; it is through our relation to the universe that we become aware of our ultimate absolute dependence. At this point our thought is reminiscent of Schleiermacher.

But religion is interested, as Höffding so clearly saw, in the conservation of values; and we mean by the term God not only that upon which we absolutely depend anyway, but that upon which we absolutely depend for the ultimate conservation of whatever ought to be conserved ultimately — that is to say, for the final conservation of whatever is so absolutely valuable that its conservation is imperatively and unconditionally demanded by everyone who appreciates what true values are. Such absolute

values, we may believe, are to be found in intelligent moral personality, and in the relations of friendship and love between intelligent moral persons. That, then, upon which we depend for the conservation of such personal values — and consequently for the conservation of persons — is God. When we use the term God in this sense we mean once more a cosmic Factor, and the only question is whether such a cosmic God exists. If we are moral optimists, we shall be logical in holding to the existence of this dependable cosmic Power. More specifically, we are moral optimists if we believe that, when our wills are dedicated to what ought to be, we have a right to be free from all worry about what the universe may do to us and to what we value — in other words, that there is a preparedness of spirit possible which will make us ready for any possible external event; and this moral optimism logically involves faith in a Power which is at once great enough and good enough (that is, favorable enough to man's true interests) to conserve for man what ought to be conserved, and what mortal man by himself is not fully able to conserve.[1] But whether we can or cannot affirm the existence of this God of moral optimism, this Conserver of absolute values, it is this that is

[1] For a further elaboration of this moral optimism and what it involves for religious belief, I must refer the reader to my book, *The Reasonableness of Christianity;* Scribner, 1925.

commonly meant when, in practical life, we make use of the religious term, God.

The Universal Energy, or whatever Cause it may be necessary to invoke to explain it, may also be evaluated as in some sense divine, an aspect of Deity. Here we are faced with a great variety of partially overlapping interpretations, from the "Prime Mover" of Aristotle to such modern conceptions as "The Infinite and Eternal Energy from which all things proceed" (Herbert Spencer); "God the Unknown" (Samuel Butler); the "Veiled Being" (H. G. Wells); and the "Integral Impetus" or "Principle of Concretion," holding all "event-particles" together in the orderly cosmos (A. N. Whitehead). A casual explanation of cosmic becoming is reasonably demanded by the rational as well as by the religious nature of man.

Furthermore, on any not purely mechanistic interpretation of life processes, an immanent Cause of creative or emergent evolution is called for. This immanent Cause is spoken of by Driesch as a "primary Entelechy in the universe," not necessarily creating absolute reality, but ordering certain parts of it. Bergson's favorite term, which he occasionally uses interchangeably with the term God, is the "Vital Impetus" (*élan vital*). This immanent Cause of creative evolution is variously described as "unceasing life, action freedom," and as "consciousness,

or supra-consciousness." Lloyd Morgan, while accepting S. Alexander's concept of "a *de facto* nisus towards Deity" in the universe, regards it as inadequate, and advances the notion of God as "Nisus in Causality manifested in all natural events," and thus "the Source of our own existence and of emergent evolution."

Before leaving the cosmic aspects of Deity, there should be recognition of the element of truth in the view of those who would insist, with W. E. Hocking, that "the true God is the Whole," or the Whole "interpreted as divine." It is true that Reality as a Whole is an object of religious interest, and the more unified the totality of reality may turn out to be, the more the religious interest will be directed toward this Reality as a Whole. This is true, even if we stop short of either the pantheistic interpretation of the universe as God or the mystical dogma that God is the one and only Reality.

We now turn from the cosmic aspects of Deity to those which are ideal and spiritual.

The Absolute in the realm of values is the Divine. This Absolute Ideal, as spiritual, comprises ideal truth, beauty, and goodness. These ideals have absolute or divine authority. Truth is a divine word. Duty is a divine law. The Absolute Spiritual Ideal is worthy of our absolute devotion. When we think

of religion as relationship to the Supreme Power in the universe, the spiritual Ideal may not seem to be God in the full sense of the word; but when we think of religion as spiritual aspiration, it is just this absolute spiritual Ideal which is truly divine. The Divine, in this sense, does not *exist*, necessarily; it *subsists* as an eternally transcendent Ideal; but it subsists as an ideal in order that it may be made to exist as a progressively immanent reality.

Spiritual values as immanent, revealed in human life, are divine. Such immanent values seem to be largely identical in meaning with what is most essential in that ancient religious object, the Logos. The Eternal Ideal, becoming actual as an immanent Spiritual Life in the realm of the intellectual, the æsthetic, the moral, the social, or the religious, makes man, in so far as the quality of his life is concerned, in some measure truly holy, divine. Now no reason can be given *a priori* why these divine qualities should not, in some particular instance or instances, emerge within human life in so extraordinary a degree that the individual would function as a satisfactory concrete embodiment or revelation of the divine Ideal; and in such a case, were it expedient, we might apply to the divine qualities which emerge the term used recently by certain philosophers (S. Alexander and Lloyd Morgan) in a somewhat different sense, namely, the "emergent quality of

deity." But it may well be questioned whether such usage would be expedient.

In what have been the most characteristic forms of Christian religious experience there are a grace and a saving power which come to man in and through the historic Jesus; and this grace and power are, in quality and function, divine. The spiritual "Power, greater than all the world, that was with Jesus," — this is Herrman's expression, — the power which gave the historic Jesus moral victory over the world, a spiritual preparedness for anything that nature or man could do to him, the power which through him and the community of his followers extends a similar spiritual experience to others, was and is divine.

Essentially similar, even if in lower degree, is the saving revelation of the Divine in other human lives, many of whom are themselves essentially the product of the saving power of the Divine presence in the historic Jesus.

The "spirit of the group" coöperating to realize the ideal is divine. This is the positive and valuable element in the doctrine of such "humanistic" pragmatists as Ames and King. When the social group is bound into unity by a spiritual purpose and mutual good will, the spirit of such a "beloved community" — to use Royce's term — is a divine or holy spirit, and is susceptible of interpretation

as meaning the presence of the Holy Spirit, or God.

In religious communion God is thought of as the Ideal Companion of the inner life. It is to this inwardly apprehended Ideal Companion that prayer is addressed; by Him that the sincerely repentant sinner feels, when he attains to faith, that he is forgiven; it is to Him that he is reconciled, and by His presence that he is encouraged and stimulated to even higher aspiration and fuller attainment. This Ideal Companion is, on the positive side, what Wells had in mind when he wrote of "God the Invisible King." This Ideal Spiritual Companion is not our ideal self — which, as we have seen, does not exist; the real self, which we know so well, is far from ideal. Psychologically, however, the Ideal Companion is like what our ideal self would be if it were real, or like what our higher self would be if it were ideal. He is felt to be as immediately accessible to our consciousness as we are to ourselves. Without identifying the Ideal Companion with either the fictitious ideal self or the real higher self, the religious expert can say, "He is as near to me as I am to myself." In Christianity the Ideal Companion is sometimes regarded as "the Christ of experience"; sometimes as the Comforter, or Paraclete, or Holy Spirit — the same Divine Companion of the inner life as was in Jesus Christ Himself.

For experimental religion which has found itself, God is that dependable Factor which always responds ultimately to the right religious adjustment. This right religious adjustment is a conscious volitional state, characterized by spiritual aspiration, concentrated attention upon God as the Source of spiritual help, self-surrender to God whose will is the moral law, an expectant and appropriating faith, and a willed responsiveness, all persisted in long enough and intensively enough to overcome all native and habitual resistance. On condition of such an adjustment, Reality, or some Factor in reality (whatever it may be and however it may be related to the human mind, conscious, subconscious, or unconscious) produces in the spiritual experience of the individual a difference which lies in the direction of the spiritual ideal. This Factor, whether we can know anything more about it or not, is really existent and is the God of experimental religion. In words that are reminiscent of Matthew Arnold, we may say that there is a Power, not for the sincerely religious mind identifiable with ourselves, which makes for righteousness in and through us, when we are rightly adjusted thereto.

The Divine, once more, is "the Holy," that which rightly awakens the attitude and feeling of reverence, awe, and worship. Rudolf Otto analyzes the Holy, with essential correctness, into an ideal element —

the true, the beautiful, the good — and a residue which he takes to be the most characteristic element in what, in the history of religion, has been felt to be the mark of the religious object. This residue, which he terms the "numinous," is that which calls forth "creature feeling," a sense of deep and awe-inspiring mystery, a fascinated wonder, and other elements of distinctively religious feeling. One might almost say that what Otto means by the numinous is what remains, or can remain, of the supernatural and of revelation in a modern, science-accepting religion; it is the supernatural minus the miraculous. It is thus essentially cosmic in its significance. Reconstructing the idea of the Holy, then, for the advanced spiritual consciousness, we may say that it has as its content an ideal or spiritual element — the true (or rational), the beautiful, and the good — and at the same time a cosmic element, involving reference to the supreme cosmic Power as revealing itself or otherwise affecting human experience. It is this supreme Cosmic Power, upon which we and our values are ultimately dependent, which wakens, even within the modern mind, the sense of religious awe and creature feeling which are so characteristic of religion; and it is only as this cosmic Power is thought of as characterized by the ideal spiritual qualities that the modern mind can bow before it in worship and absolute devotion.

Thus in the concept of the Holy, with its element of the Ideal and the Numinous, we seem to have found the beginning of a synthesis of the two principal groups of the aspects of Deity specified above, namely, the cosmic and the spiritual.

We must go more fully into the question whether the various aspects of Deity listed above are mutually compatible, and if so, what composite view of God results from their synthesis.

Perhaps the most glaring seeming discrepancy in our list is that between God as Absolute Reality and the Divine as the Absolute Ideal. In practical life an ideal is that which is not yet a reality, but is to be made real. Can God, or the Divine, be both an Absolute Ideal and absolutely real? Absolute idealists, especially those of the older school, answer in the affirmative. They maintain that God or the Absolute is the Ideal Reality — the Absolute Ideal realized. But they mean by the Absolute an all-inclusive Reality, all existence as a unified whole. From this point of view there can be no validity, ultimately, in the moral consciousness; all reality, including each and every human being, is, in his true nature, from the absolute point of view, ideal, eternally perfect; the true ideal for everybody is eternally real; there is nothing to do, for all is eternally done. Thus what morality and common sense must affirm, religion and

philosophy, from the absolutist point of view, must deny.

But surely it is not a satisfactory procedure to seek to do justice to religion by destroying confidence in the ultimate validity of morality. If the moral ideal is absolutely imperative, it must also be absolutely valid. The discrediting of morality is too heavy a price to pay for the vindication of religion. The idealistic way of uniting the two concepts of the Divine as ideal and the Divine as real is a failure.

Assuming, then, that the absolutist's way of uniting the ideas of God as absolutely real and the Divine as the Absolute Ideal is forbidden us, may it not be possible, nevertheless, to maintain that the real God is ideal in quality? How otherwise could the real God be a legitimate object of absolute worship? Can any object continue to be regarded by thinking people as God, unless the object in question is thought of as being absolutely real and absolutely ideal? Does not religion, as worship and dependence, implicitly presuppose the union of both qualities, absolute reality and absolute ideality, in the religious Object? There is a normal alternation in religion between dependence and worship. Religion as dependence uses God as means. Religion as worship appreciates God as end. Religion as worship demands ideality; religion as dependence, absolute reality. The union of these two phases of

normal religion points to the union of ideality and reality in God. Indeed, the motive which leads us to postulate God leads us to define what we mean by the God thus postulated, and to define that God as the Ideal Reality. Only, be it remembered, it is not in the sense in which absolute idealism speaks of ideal reality that we are committed to the use of that term. It cannot be an all-inclusive reality that is absolutely ideal, or an all-inclusive ideal that is absolutely realized; if it were, there could be no moral task for either God or man. Once more, then, how can we regard as valid both religion with its postulate of an absolutely Ideal Reality as the object of worship and dependence, and morality, with its assumption that the Absolute Ideal is not yet real, but is to be made real with the coöperation of human moral agents?

Paradoxical as it may seem, it is quite possible, without contradiction, to maintain with religion that the Absolute Ideal is already real, a perfectly satisfactory Object of religious dependence and worship, and to maintain with morality that the Absolute Ideal is not yet real, but to be made real through obedience to the moral law. The unifying concept is that of *moral will*. If God is characterized by moral will, He may be absolutely ideal in character, and yet His perfect will may be still largely unrealized in the objective world. On this supposition God,

as a Being of ideal or perfect moral will, can be trusted and worshiped with absolute satisfaction, while there is ample room for the absolute imperative of the moral consciousness calling man to a share in the task of making the ideal ends of the good will of God actual in the world of human experience.

But moral will is essentially personal, personality being understood to mean, essentially, a being which is conscious, self-conscious, and consciously self-directing. If, then, God is Moral Will, He must be essentially personal. Superpersonality, if intelligible at all, is a self-contradictory concept unless it includes personality; we know no higher kind of reality than the personal, nor can we imagine any. Besides, as we have just seen, the reconciliation of religion and morality calls for the interpretation of God in terms of moral personality.

One of the aspects of Deity specified in our list, it will be remembered, was that of the Ideal Companion of the inner life. Now God as moral Personality, absolutely worshipful and absolutely dependable, would be ideally qualified to be this Spiritual Companion. What if it be He that is so immediately accessible to us in our inner life, as near to us as we are to ourselves? In fact, spiritual religion cannot separate the two. It is to the Companion God, to the Inner Companion as God, that we express our soul's sincere desire; our highest ideal we identify

with His will for us; our sin against self or others we feel to be disloyalty to Him; we learn to love Him, and we become convinced that He knows and loves us, perhaps not so much for what we are as for what we may become; when we repent of our sin so sincerely that we can forgive ourselves, we become sure that He forgives us; turning to Him in trust, we experience reconciliation, peace, and fellowship with Him.

Moreover, this moral, personal God, Companion of the inner life, really existent and in character ideal, is qualified to call forth from us that right religious adjustment which conditions the religious experience which we have learned to think of as moral salvation. Indeed, it is to this Inner Companion of the inner life that the right religious adjustment is consciously directed. And what might well be anyone's surmise is the assurance of the religious, namely, that the dependable Factor which makes for moral salvation on condition of the right religious adjustment is this same moral, personal God, the Ideal Companion of the inner life.

We have still to consider, in the light of this view of God as personal, the mutual relation of the spiritual and the cosmic aspects of Deity.[1] The spiritual

[1] The solution of this age-old problem offered in the Upanishads, that Brahman is Atman, is significant still, as bearing witness to the religious need to identify the cosmic God and the God of spiritual

aspects of Deity, the Divine in terms of ideal values becoming immanent in human life, particularly through the spiritual influence of great and good personalities and through definite religious experience, are readily interpreted as the progressive realization of the conscious moral purpose of God through the immanence of the Divine Spiritual Life in varying degrees in the lives of men. But what of the relation of this immanent Spiritual Life to the cosmic aspects of Deity? In our examination of the idea of the Holy, it will be remembered, we discovered that the religious Object, as the Holy, includes, as essential constituents from the point of view of modern spiritual religion in vital form, cosmic Reality as well as the spiritual Ideal. Can we go further and establish on a reasonable basis the surmise that the cosmic and the spiritual aspects of Deity are but different phases of one and the same Divine Reality?

One of the most important identifications for us to be able to make between cosmic and spiritual aspects of Deity would be between that upon which we depend for the ultimate conservation of our highest values and that dependable Factor which responds to the right religious adjustment. Is the cosmic Conserver of Values the God of spiritual religious

experience; but to make the identification without first distinguishing the cosmic God from the cosmos or the God of spiritual experience from the self, is extremely crude and, from the point of view of morality and moral religion, highly unsatisfactory.

experience? The former we need to believe in; of the latter we are in a position to be assured. If the identification can be made, we may be assured of both. Now the identification is one which can be made, reasonably enough, from the point of view of moral optimism. Briefly stated, the argument is this: Moral optimism logically involves the existence of the God we need. The God we need must be great enough and good enough to conserve for us our highest values. It is reasonable to expect that so great and good a God will be able and willing to reveal Himself, particularly by responding in a recognizable and dependable way to the right religious adjustment on the part of man. But, as we have seen, it has been discovered through experience that a God who responds dependably to the right religious adjustment really exists. The presumption then is that the Conserver of Values, the God of moral optimism, is one and the same Divine Being as the God of revelation, of religious experience, of moral salvation.

But there are other cosmic elements which must not be left out of consideration in determining the nature of the religious Object. The fundamental cosmic aspects of Deity were found to be these: a Reality not identifiable with physical things or human persons; the Supreme Factor in Reality as that upon which we are ultimately dependent, that

upon which we depend for the ultimate conservation of the highest values; the immanent Cause of cosmic process in general and of creative evolution more particularly; and finally, although more ambiguously, Reality as a unified whole. A unifying concept is called for, to bring together these cosmic aspects and the spiritual phases of Deity, and the one which seems to be most obviously suggested by the facts is that of a psychophysical organism, animated by an indwelling spiritual mind and will. This analogy of the organism is inadequate, to be sure, but it is undoubtedly preferable to the antimoral idealistic notion of one eternally static, all-inclusive pool of conscious experience. The physical universe is God's holy, awe-inspiring Body; its energy is God's physical energy, organically related to a central "loving, intelligent Will." In one sense God may be thought of as including the Divine Body and Divine Life Force, as well as the Divine Mind and Will. This is the element of truth in the higher pantheism. But the real God, after all, like the real man, is the Spirit, not the body; the personal Mind and Will employing the energy for the fulfillment of conscious purposes, and not the physical energy itself. God being thus reasonably thought of as existing in the likeness of man, it is not difficult to believe that man has been made in the image of God.

The analogy may be carried somewhat further. The human mind and will are sometimes more fully immanent in the activities of the body than at other times. It may be in response to the stimulus of pain or of some other sensation that we put ourselves more fully into what our body is doing, and sometimes, it would seem, the initiative is with the mind itself. Similarly, in response to prayer as the right religious adjustment — and no doubt also often or always of the Divine initiative — the immanent Divine Spirit enters more fully into the lives of men. From this point of view human individuals in their relation to the Divine Body and Spirit may be regarded as psychophysical organs — or better, perhaps, as cells — within the one great cosmic psychophysical Organism. The analogy holds at many points. Man, by taking thought, can modify not only his bodily behavior but in time even the structure of his body. Similarly the immanent Divine Life can influence conduct and modify character. And as the life of the body is able to regenerate mutilated tissues and in some organisms entire organs, so there is a healing function exercised by the immanent Divine Life, regenerating and renewing the spiritual vigor of individuals and social groups.

But this analogy of the central will and its psychophysical organism is hardly adequate for the full

setting-forth of the nature of the relation of God to human persons. It is still too external a view it gives us. We must supplement it by means of another analogy, which is also in its turn insufficient and in need of being supplemented by the first. We must pass from the thought of a psychophysical organism to that of a spiritual society of which God is the dominant Spirit, or better, to that of a well-beloved family of which God is the Father. But the relation of God to man, while social, is more intimate than that of one member of a social group to another; and man's dependence upon God is more permanent, and his fellowship with God more intimate, than that of a child in relation to his father.

We have not been concerned, primarily at least, to prove the existence of God, but rather to state what we may legitimately mean when we use the terms "God" and "Divine." Many of the aspects of Deity included in our list have been so obviously real that proof of their existence would have been superfluous. Proofs that God, as described in some of the other aspects, exists, is a matter of experience, not of argument. This is especially true of God as the Dependable Factor, responding to the right religious adjustment. In another instance the empirical proof is necessarily largely in the future, our reference being to God as the ultimate Conserver of

Absolute Values. But while the empirical proof of this idea of God is future, the reasonableness of the belief may be inferred from the validity of that normal and wholesome life-attitude which we have called moral optimism. And in the final synthesis, according to which God is viewed as an essentially personal Spiritual Life, immanent in and using a cosmic Body, and related to human beings both immanently as a Higher Life and socially as an ever-present Perfect Friend, we have what may be regarded as a theory which, while not fully demonstrable from a critical point of view, is nevertheless a possible and reasonable interpretation of the outstanding facts and values of human experience.

CONCERNING GOD

HORACE JAMES BRIDGES

ETHICAL CULTURE SOCIETY, CHICAGO

A Londoner by birth, Horace James Bridges received his training at the University of London, and was for seven years associated with Dr. Stanton Coit in the West London Ethical Culture Society. He came to America in 1913, whereof he has told us in his essay, *On Becoming an American* — not to know which is to miss an inspiration and a delight. Other books by Dr. Bridges are *The Religion of Experience*, *As I Was Saying*, and best of all, perhaps, *Our Fellow Shakespeare*, — to read which is to make friends with the gentle, wise, clear-seeing, all-merciful spirit of the master poet.

As lecturer for the Ethical Culture Society of Chicago, as writer and servant of the common good, Dr. Bridges is an inspiring influence and guide in behalf of the higher life. The following essay will help many a vexed mind to a clearer and happier outlook, alike by its spirit and point of view. A mystical note runs through it, recalling a sunset hour when a little boy fell in love with the world, and the glow of the vision blends with the far-ranging thought of the man, adding a seer-like touch to his thought and giving to his faith the lilt and lift of a lyric.

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ETHICAL CULTURE SOCIETY, CHICAGO

THE term "God" is properly one of poetry, and somebody has said that the task of our age is to find the prose for it. When the geographer calls the earth an oblate spheroid and the poet calls it the mighty mother of mankind, the one is talking science and the other mysticism, if you will, but both are speaking truth. The one is saying what the earth would be from the point of view of an enlightened observer in Betelgeuse, who knew no more whether this planet is inhabited than we know whether Betelgeuse is, but could observe its astronomical behavior; the other is saying what it is from the standpoint of mankind, gratefully conscious that to Mother Earth we directly owe the possibility of this most joyous and enthralling adventure called life.

I beg to be understood as using the term God in this latter fashion, and that no more strictly scientific content may be read into it, as used here, than is read into the term Mother when the poet applies it to the earth.

As a small boy, living in a particularly dreary and uninspiring suburb of London, I owed my education, secular and religious, to the Church of England — the "High" variety of it. Later I was transferred, through a family removal, to the Baptist denomination. I am eternally indebted and heartily grateful to both for the fine personal influences they supplied, and for the protective moral atmosphere they placed around me. So far as I have escaped the moral and spiritual pitfalls that surround us, — especially those that lurk in the path of poor, fatherless, and almost friendless boys in a city like London, — I realize that it was because my pastors and teachers fulfilled, in regard to me, that prayer of the Church: "Prevent us, O Lord, in all our doings, with Thy most gracious favor."

But I was always puzzled by the religious teaching given to me. When I was eight or nine years old we spent an entire term at school — with a lesson every morning, I believe — on the Book of Joshua. I had that book by heart. But even at the time I was shocked by the conduct of God as described therein. We could not ask questions, and I doubt whether at that age I should have dared to ask whether this God who ordered battles and massacres was the same personage we heard about at church, and were taught to pray to, and whom Jesus talked about. But the unasked questions were urgent and

insistent within me. I hope my dear old school is not still giving its children a year on Joshua; or, if it is, I hope it is giving rational explanations about the sanguinary deity of the Israelites in their pre-prophetic period.

Then a thing happened, about which I have never before tried to tell anybody — and I doubt whether I can now. I was playing in the back yard of our squalid little suburban home. There was great trouble in the family, of the sort that strikes a child as all the more portentous and disastrous because he cannot clearly understand it; and this vague sorrow was heavy on me. By the place where it happened, I know that I cannot have been more than nine years old at the time. It must have been a summer day; and suddenly I lifted my sad eyes toward the western sky. One of those miraculous sunsets that are occasionally to be seen through the smoky haze of London was in all its glory. Instantly my trouble fell from me. The universe spoke to me. It said, "Don't worry. Underneath are the everlasting arms." And I believed it, and have never doubted it since, and never can doubt it. Because I am sure of that, I can doubt and have doubted everything else. I want skepticism to be pushed to its utmost possible length and to do its full work in every department of science, philosophy, and religion, because I live by this assurance: that at

the end of all the questionings will be found the vindication of that certitude.

Now I am quite aware that the psychologists can give a perfectly natural and scientific explanation of my little bit of mystical experience. At least, they are sure they can. Even at the time, I did not think I had heard a voice speaking to me through the ear. No, it was infinitely, inexpressibly deeper than that; far more like the wordless exchange that sometimes takes place at first sight between youth and maiden. Indeed, I don't know how to put it except in the banal phrase that I fell in love with the universe, and received the assurance that it was n't a one-sided affair.

The reader may laugh at this, as my seniors and teachers might have done if I had dared to tell my experience. The fear that they would do so made me keep it to myself, as I have done until this day. And I tell it here only because I cannot disclose what is deepest in my experience of God without telling it. After all, what a man thinks about God must grow out of personal experience if it is to mean anything at all; and that childish experience of mine is still the most certain thing in my life. So I hereby invite the psychologists to label and pigeon-hole me, and determine the precise type of delusion, illusion, or hallucination I suffered — only they must n't ask me to doubt that the thing happened and that the

assurance was given to me, because I can much more easily doubt the existence of the psychologists than that. I have nothing but my own consciousness to trust for my belief in the existence of the desk I write on; and to doubt or deny my little bit of religious experience — or whatever you like to call it — would be to invalidate the very power which assures me of the existence of the desk and the psychologists.

Well, this sounds as though it should be the prelude to a story of lifelong religious activities. But the London of the eighteen-nineties, to a boy who had left school at twelve years of age and was fumblingly trying to pick up a living in various blind-alley jobs, was hardly conducive to that. And it fell out — whether by accident, or whether as the result of my lurking anger with the god of the Book of Joshua, I cannot positively say — that my reading at the age of sixteen or so ran rather to the kind of materialistic popularized science which was then fashionable than to theology or devotional literature. For a year or two I was baffled by the idea that force and matter are the only realities — or the only reality. Then, in a happy hour, I blundered on Huxley's book on *Hume, with Helps to the Study of Berkeley*.

If I were in the habit of praying, I should want to offer a special prayer every night for the well-being of the soul of Thomas Henry Huxley; for, all unconsciously, he did to me, when I was eighteen years

old or thereabouts, a service for which I can never be sufficiently thankful. He knocked the stuffing out of materialism for me. Many people think he was a materialist himself, and the particular physical science work in which he was mainly engaged often made it natural for him to talk like one. Perhaps he was not always consistent. But his marvelously penetrating intellect made it impossible for him to remain on the level of that besetting fallacy. Two great things I owe to him: one, the demonstration that consciousness is an independent reality, the only reality we truly know; the other, the conviction that it is always wrong, a blasphemy against truth, morally ruinous to one's self and a disservice to mankind, to pretend to believe what one does not believe. The day will come when Huxley's agnosticism will be justly classed as one of mankind's great ethical discoveries.

To Matthew Arnold I am indebted for the beginnings of a true understanding of the Bible. The fury with Joshua's god, which in many young fellows of my time and set developed into a narrow and cocksure secularism, gave way at once when the rational, comparative, evolutionary conception of religion put that wretched deity in his place, and one came to see the work of the Hebrew prophets as predominantly a struggle against the savage tribalism which their people had inherited. From Arnold also I learned

to follow what I still believe to be the true clue to the understanding of Jesus and Saint Paul. Arnold was weak on the metaphysical side; but so were the great Hebrews, including Jesus and Saint Paul. Yet what a religious genius he was, and how his poetical and religious genius did set him on the right track for getting insight into their yet greater spiritual genius! I still try to find time every year to reread *Literature and Dogma*, *God and the Bible*, and *Saint Paul and Protestantism*.

The revelation from Huxley started me into the wonderland of philosophy, and I have more or less ransacked its treasure houses, from Plato to Bergson, always returning, however, for a clearer grip upon the fundamentals, to the first part of Thomas Hill Green's *Prolegomena to Ethics* and to his "General Introduction" to Hume — which, like the great independent work it is, ought to be published separately. And the revelation from Arnold started me into the study of the Bible as illuminated and made lovely by the light of historical and literary criticism. The net result is that, while I have never wavered in the faith that came to me on the wings of the sunset in my childhood, yet I suppose I can never be an orthodox Christian or even an orthodox theist.

Happily for me, when my reading had made attendance at the Baptist church too insincere to be possible, I found my way, after a year or two of

mental solitude, into one of the London Ethical Societies. That was twenty-four or twenty-five years ago. For me, with my particular needs and problems, it was and is the ideal fellowship. Not only has it given me absolute liberty to "beat [my] music out" with the growth of time and thought, but it has patiently borne with what must often have seemed like vagaries, and it has given me a position of leadership and a steady encouragement and support utterly beyond my deserts, demanding from me, unless I would be the most ungrateful wretch that ever breathed, the best service that heart and brain can render.

My thought concerning God, in this fellowship where everyone is asked to think as freely, as sincerely, and as thoroughly as he can, is mainly indebted to two great men, my leaders first in England and afterward here: Stanton Coit and Felix Adler. Both reject the supernatural; both are convinced of the reality of the supersensible. Coit uses the term "God" to denote "the sum total of the good in the world," the principle of love and service in the heart of man, and all the influences and agencies in the outer world that favor it and conduce to its triumph. Adler ascribes to every human being an essential spiritual self. He regards mankind as but one province of the spiritual universe. For him, ultimate reality, or deity, is an eternal spiritual

host, an infinite multiplicity of spirits, the unity of which consists in the infinite network of relations subsisting among its members, those relations being of such nature that by them the unique perfection of each is elicited and in turn elicits that of others.

Before sketching my own tentative conceptions in this field, I desire to set down two thoughts which, even from boyhood, have played a running accompaniment, as it were, to all my broodings on the eternal questions. We are always being reminded of the revolution in our thought which the advance of science has precipitated. Undoubtedly that is a fact. But I always try to remember how the world must have looked in the light of the science of three hundred years ago. Archbishop Ussher knew the precise date of the creation. Sir Thomas Browne was almost sure of the actual date of the final consummation of all things. The world had six thousand years in all to run, of which fifty-six hundred were up. There was not time, as he quaintly put it, for another Methuselah. It was a cosy little affair, that seventeenth-century universe, with a roof that was only beginning to slide backward into space. (Remember the terror of Pascal when it receded, and the unplumbed abyss came into mental view.)

Now when, in the eighteen-nineties, I read the confident conclusions of the then fashionable materialism and atheism, — as voiced, for example, by

that splendid and brilliant young-man-in-a-hurry, W. K. Clifford, — something inside me always said: "Yes, this is how the world looks from the point of view of the science of the moment. But remember how absurd and grotesque we now find that idea of the world which was the only one possible to very great men three centuries ago. Sir Thomas Browne's universe was not the thought-creation of a fool; it was that of a fine intellect and a noble soul, working, however, with data the preposterous incompleteness of which we know but he could not know. Is it not overwhelmingly probable that the world-view suggested by our present science will look almost as childish, in the light of the twenty-second century, as that suggested by seventeenth-century science looks to us to-day?" I am very glad this idea came to me then, for the progress of science since the turn of the century has already forced upon us a radically different conception of the world from that sketched for us by the partial knowledge of the last quarter of the nineteenth century.

My other mental stand-by has been that profound platitude — I call it that, so that I may emphasize the adjective, and leave the reader free, if he wishes, to emphasize the noun — of Bishop Butler: "Things are what they are, and their consequences will be what they will be; why then should we wish to be deceived?" It was by finding this quoted in some

book or article that I was first led to read the *Analogy*. Butler put into words the thought that had been struggling for formulation in my mind ever since my childish "revelation." Here we were, with science every year or every month shying some bombshell or other into the mental universes we were struggling to construct. We were being blown about by every wind, not of doctrine, but of discovery. Yet all the time I *knew* it was all right. I had a faith too deep for utterance, too sure for fear, that in the long run Reality would prove to be better and saner and more beautiful than anything any man had ever said or ever could say about it.

Well, Butler came to my assistance. I am not a pragmatist, though this was before pragmatism had been baptized by William James. It seems to me that the pragmatists have mistaken a psychological account of how we find truth for a philosophical account of what truth is when found. Butler reminded me that Reality is what it is unchangeably; that our varying, groping thoughts neither make nor unmake it. We have to "voyage through strange seas of thought alone." Our atheism no more empties the heavens than the confident dogmatic theism or polytheism of our religious forbears filled them. When it becomes obvious to us that Yahweh and the Olympians are not good enough to be real, nothing happens in the heavens; the change is only

in our minds. We go through one of the growing-pains of our spiritual education — that is all.

And this brings me to what I must say on the affirmative side in answer to the question, "In what terms do you think of God?" As my answer must be very brief, I will try to reduce it to a series of numbered propositions: —

1. I think it misleading to speak of God as personal, or as a person, although I freely admit that personality is the least inadequate clue we have to the nature of that which utterly transcends knowledge and definition. As applied to God, the idea of personality is but a symbol; and it is of the nature of symbols to be inadequate to and incommensurable with the realities they symbolize. Man is a rudimentary, half-evolved creature, at best. He does not know the limits of his own selfhood, nor by what submerged continents of psychic being he may be linked with his seemingly isolated fellow mortals. How then can he prison in the notion of personality — by which he means likeness to his conscious self — the infinite and eternal Source, not only of what he is, but of what he and all the universe have it in them to become?

2. For the same reason, I hesitate to apply the category of number to the Godhead — to say that God is One, or Three, or — as Professor Adler has it — a unified multiplicity. The problem of the One

and the Many is unsolved; at least, I doubt whether my revered teacher has solved it. Rather, it seems to me that he has cut the Gordian knot instead of untying it. If you say God must be either one or many, I answer that that would be true enough if you were talking of some object to which man's thought is adequate. But there are many things to which it is hopelessly inadequate. Even of our human selves, the truest thing we seem able to say is that they are at once one and many. And when we are talking of God, the only certainty is that no analogy drawn from the time series and space series of our experience can do other than mislead us if we use it seriously as a basis for inferences. That way lie the creeds, with their certain sequel of schisms and heresies, the prolific brood of all defined dogma and probably of mutual hatreds and bloodsheddings.

3. I am not a pantheist, because it seems to me that pantheism inevitably leads to the bridging of the gulf between good and evil. If all is God, then right and wrong are but two aspects of the same reality, and evil is only an illusion. But the devils we have to fight, in ourselves and outside ourselves, are too desperately real to be disposed of by any such soothing sophistry. The problem of evil is intellectually insoluble, and those who think to solve it by denying the reality of evil are like children who shut their eyes and say that the ugly thing is n't

there. Our business with evil is to fight it tooth and nail, not deny its existence; but some of us, when evil seems most triumphant, can retire to an inner secret place and recover our balance, in the strength of an unprovable but indestructible certitude that the Good in the world is still more real, and is ultimately triumphant.

4. "God" is a term of poetry, thrown out, as Matthew Arnold said, at a reality too vast to grasp. It is therefore no more to be made the basis of a science or a set of dogmas than is the phrase "Spirit of intellectual beauty," in Shelley's poem. But the reality to which it points is more real than we ourselves are, and more certain — to me, I mean — than certainty of our own existence. For it is the source of my own existence and of the world that my senses apprehend and my intellect seeks to explore. It originates not only time and space, but also those rational powers in us which enable us to throw the network of time and space over the data of the senses and shape them into a world of discourse. From it also we derive that power of distinguishing between the worth of rival solicitations to action, which is the eternal and indestructible root of all morality and all religion. Of it we may say, with Emily Brontë, that though sun and stars were blotted out, and the earth with all its creatures vanished like a mist, yet "every existence would exist

in Thee." For when we say "God," we mean that in which all that ever was or will be exists eternally, ideally, potentially, perfectedly. To think of it as "a magnified, non-natural man" is only less absurd than thinking of it as a magnified lamb or lion. But to think of it as lower than the highest type of being to which it has given origin is still more absurd.

5. Of the utter reality of God I am thus convinced. But of the mode of its relation to the world and to myself I am agnostic. Some people talk of things being too good to be true. My conviction is that no idea or ideal in the mind of man is good enough to be true; no, not even the statement that God is our Father. It does not indicate — no word can — the identity of the deepest self in us with the Ultimate Reality whence it issues and on which it depends. How we can be identical with that from which we are yet distinct, we do not and cannot know; yet the fact is so. Even for the materialist it is so.

6. Life is a struggle, not for existence (since the struggle cannot begin until the existence is already achieved), but for freedom; and in this struggle man has gained the largest extant measure of success. That is why our sense of moral responsibility is not a mockery; it is not an illusion. Our task is to increase the measure of freedom the race has attained, to carry its victory to further objectives.

7. As to immortality, my conviction stands thus: If there be anything in me that is of permanent worth and service to the universe, the universe will know how to preserve it. Whatsoever in me is not of permanent worth and service, neither can nor should be preserved. "What is excellent . . . is permanent." Or, rather, what is excellent is eternal, above the shock of cosmic change, unreachable by the vicissitudes of time. If immortality is not true, it is because something inconceivably better is true.

8. As to prayer: if a serenity of trust without vision, of "faith beyond the forms of faith," of readiness for life or death, constitutes prayer, — which trust is the result of no merit or conscious striving of my own, but is the unbought favor originating in the childish experience I have described, and continued to me ever since, — if this be prayer, I believe in it and practise it. But there are only two uttered prayers or expressions of faith that I dare trust myself to repeat. They are, "Not my will but Thine be done," and "*In la Tua volontade e nostra pace*" — in both of which the personal pronouns would be presumptuous and misleading if one did not remember their poetical and symbolical character. Not what my unpurged, self-centered will, not what my infantine, groping mind desires, but what a perfect will, enlightened by infinite knowledge, would will for me — this be done in me

and through me. And in *that* will is our peace: in entire conformity to that ideal and perfect Order of Ultimate Reality. Partial disharmony with it is disease and misery; total disharmony with it is death, or nonexistence. Glad self-identification with it is our peace, and makes us equal to life and to death.

9. Life, with all its sorrows and evils (whereof I have seen and experienced no small or common share), is a boon unspeakable. The urge to pour out the heart's thanks for it is the best excuse mankind can offer for its presumption in personifying the infinite Reality.

> Praised be the fathomless Universe
> For life and joy, and for objects and knowledge curious,
> And for love, sweet love; but praise, O praise and praise
> For the sure-enwinding arms of cool-enfolding Death.

Yes, for death also. For life is so good that the sternest conditions of the gift are for its sake lovely and precious too. Let me die, that others may experience the inexpressible privilege which has been accorded to me. *Fiat voluntas tua.* "Glad did I live, and gladly die." Pessimists condemn the world because it ruthlessly destroys precious things. But their own conscience, their own standard of what ought to be, by tacit reference to which they condemn what is — that is the highest clue to reality they have. Life is not bad because precious things perish;

it is good because they exist and cannot perish though they disappear, but live on in us, and extend their influence through the sea of time in ever-widening circles.

I cannot prove that I am alive; but I cannot doubt it. I cannot prove that ultimately all is well; but I can doubt that even less than I can doubt that I live and think. "Don't worry. Underneath are the everlasting arms."

THE HUMAN GOD

JOHN H. DIETRICH

FIRST UNITARIAN SOCIETY, MINNEAPOLIS

A Pennsylvanian, born forty-eight years ago, John Hassler Dietrich was educated at Franklin and Marshall College and the Reformed Theological Seminary, Lancaster. Ordained to the Reformed ministry in 1905, six years later he entered the Unitarian fellowship, and at present is pastor of the First Unitarian Society of Minneapolis. To his work as a minister he adds many labors in behalf of civic and social welfare.

Among a number of books by Dr. Dietrich the following may be named as showing the tendency of his thinking: *The Gain for Religion in Modern Thought; The Religion of a Sceptic; Substitutes for Old Beliefs; From Star-dust to Soul;* and *Do We Need a New Moral Outlook?* The essay here to be read sets forth the humanistic point of view, now so much in vogue either consciously or unconsciously, among younger men of the liberal type.

As a statement of an attitude, the essay has value, even if it does fill some of us with wonder and makes doubly difficult any effort to weave this symposium into a symphony. None the less, all points of view ought to be heard, in the interest of understanding.

THE HUMAN GOD

JOHN H. DIETRICH

FIRST UNITARIAN SOCIETY, MINNEAPOLIS

The German philosopher, Fichte, once said, "Every concept of God is necessarily that of an idol," meaning that the gods in which people have believed from time to time have never been the real God, although they have stood as representative of something real. There never was such a being as Thor, Ahura Mazda, Jupiter, or Jehovah; and yet the practical Persian believed in Ahura Mazda with all his soul, the intelligent Roman paid his devotions to the mighty Jupiter, and the reverent Hebrew regarded Jehovah as the ruler of the universe. Jupiter and Jehovah and all the other gods were but creations of the imagination; but in varying degree they symbolized something real. These gods served as the concrete symbols of the Great Reality which is too abstract for the ordinary mind to grasp. They were metaphors to be taken figuratively and not literally. While a metaphor is purely imaginative, it represents a reality. As animals have sometimes been metaphorically described as human beings, so the Ultimate Reality has been described as a man, and has

been invested with human name and form. This holds of the latest conception of God as well as the earliest.

Our modern conceptions of God are infinitely higher than the earlier ones, but they are none the less metaphors. There is no such being actually enthroned above the clouds. The figure of the Christian God, like that of the rest, is a product of the imagination. He is also a metaphor to be taken figuratively, and not literally. One of the most inportant things for man in his thought of God, as in all his thought, is to distinguish between the symbol and the thing symbolized. And this religious thought has so frequently failed to do. It has practically always asserted, not that its manlike image of God only symbolizes, but that it *is* that higher power — that the sign is identical with the thing signified.

We must continue to fashion our conception of deity after our ability, but we should always hold fast to this fundamental distinction between that Ultimate Being, which we know really exists, and the creation of our imagination, which does not really exist, and which is valuable only for what it suggests. And, once this fundamental distinction is really grasped, there will be less intolerance toward those who happen to hold a different conception of God.

THE HUMAN GOD

I

In order to present the symbol which most nearly satisfies me both intellectually and spiritually, which I fear will seem somewhat strange and inadequate to those who are accustomed to the more familiar symbols, I must indicate in a few words why the old symbols are no longer adequate; why the individualized symbol is not the best symbol for the thought and life of our time. The popular concept of God is perhaps best summed up in the threefold character of Creator, Ruler, and Father.

First of all, people look upon God as the Creator, the "Maker of heaven and earth." This was a perfectly natural conception in the days when the world was looked upon as a manufactured product. The universe was once regarded as a marvelous piece of mechanism and implied a creator who made it, just as the watch implies the watchmaker who produced it. But this whole idea of the world as made by a creator has disappeared to-day, because men are thinking now in terms of evolution and not of creation. The universe is now regarded, not as a product of manufacture, but as a product of growth. Such a change of course causes great changes in all our ideas, but especially in our idea of God, for if the world is not a creation then there is no longer need of a creator. The doctrine of evolution ended

the idea of a creator for all time, and gave us an entirely different idea of God. If we think of the universe as something that has grown like a tree instead of something that was made like a watch, then we think of the Supreme Power no longer as a personal creator, but as a nameless, indefinite, mysterious principle which is the source of all being.

Secondly, people think of God as a ruler of the universe, a king, as portrayed in the hymns, "Come Thou Almighty King," and "Worship the King all glorious above." This conception was the natural result of the monarchical idea which prevailed in government in the past. The supreme power of the state was vested in a single individual, and it was natural then to think of God as a royal sovereign. Indeed, no other conception of divine government was possible in those days. But in this age of democracy, when we think of ruling power as residing, not in a single individual, but in the whole body of the people, it is nothing short of ridiculous to think of God as a king. So the king conception is hopelessly obsolete in a day when the whole world has declared itself to be through with kings. In a democracy sovereignty is believed to reside in the whole people; and so democratic people are inclined to think of the divine sovereignty as residing, not in some remote and terrible person sitting on a distant throne in heaven, but right here in the minds

and hearts of men. Democracy is more likely to think of God, not as king, but as people; and so the metaphor of God as king is utterly incapable of arousing the interest or enthusiasm of men in this age whose passion is democracy.

Thirdly, people hold the conception of God as a Heavenly Father; and this they are much more loath to abandon than the conception of Creator and King, because they want to think of deity as a powerful and loving spirit which guides and protects them from harm. But the many cases in which individuals have to suffer out of all proportion to their deserts without conceivable reason, or in which great unusual calamities befall multitudes of men and deal suffering and destruction to good and bad alike, force us to give up the idea that we are under the protection of any sheltering and beneficent parent. If there is any one thing of which we can be certain to-day, it is the unchanging and inexorable operation of the forces of nature. We think of the universe to-day in terms of law. There are certain causes which produce certain effects and certain results which always follow certain causes. Furthermore, these causes and effects are quite as likely to be harmful to man as beneficial, and his lot therefore quite as likely to be evil as good. All of which means one thing: that whatever deity may be, it is not a father who is able and willing to guard and

guide mankind in the spirit of perfect love. We look out upon the universe and we see no evidence of that all-powerful, all-good parental care which is necessary to the idea of fatherhood.

II

Now in religion I preach and try to practise what has come to be known as Humanism — a religion based upon the doctrine of man as an end rather than a means. All the old religions presupposed a certain type of God, and then considered man as a means toward realizing the purposes and desires of this being. It was taught that the chief end of men was to glorify God. But Humanism considers human life an end in itself, and teaches that everything in life should contribute to the glory of men rather than to the glory of God. It holds that the truly religious values are the human values, and that the real virtues are those things which contribute toward the enrichment of the individual life and the improvement of the social order. This makes Humanism a forward-looking religion, as contrasted with the older theistic religions which were backward-looking. These latter dealt with the problem of beginnings, but the former deals almost entirely with the problem of ends.

Humanism says that while we may know nothing about the "First Cause," we do know that in the

world in which we live there is great opportunity for improvement in every direction, and that every man must play his part in this struggle after a better and nobler life. There is individual character to be developed, and a just and harmonious social order to be created; and we are the forces through which these functions must be fulfilled. As we study the principles of evolution and the history of man, we realize that there is no power outside the universe that helps in these tasks — in fact there is no power outside of man himself that fashions individual character and human society. Therefore Humanism, little concerned with the origin of things but vitally concerned with their end, knowing of no power outside of man himself which directs the great struggle after individual and social righteousness, enthrones deity in the human heart rather than above the stars. It teaches the doctrine of immanence, that God is in the universe, the world-spirit which pervades the totality of things. It does not confine deity by any means to the spirit of humanity; but it says that this great world-spirit, so far as we know, finds its highest expression in humanity, and it is therefore in humanity that we must look for the deepest manifestation of the divine. It recognizes that mysterious presence which is in all and through all; but for all practical purposes it centres it in humanity.

Just as the older theism took the individual man

and glorified and idealized him with all the attributes of its God, so Humanism takes humanity and glorifies and idealizes it with the attributes of a God. In other words, the God-idea is embodied, not in an idealized individual outside of the world, but in an idealized people in the world.

III

So I believe that the whole process and development of the universe from the beginning until now has been the result, not of a personal creator and ruler outside of it, setting it in motion, directing its course, and shaping its development, but of the working of some inward motive power — a power which at first perhaps was an unconscious impulse, but which has developed into self-directing consciousness in humanity, the highest expression of that power on this planet and its controlling force in so far as human affairs are concerned. Until recently this impulse no doubt pushed forward blindly, all unconscious of what its end might be; but at last in man it has assumed the proportions of consciousness, and henceforth will be consciously directed by humanity. I believe therefore that it rests with us to control this force and give it definite shape and direction, and that the destiny of humanity lies entirely in our hands. The future then lies wide open before us, to do with it what we will. This standpoint must

profoundly affect our whole attitude toward life. Its importance cannot be exaggerated, neither can the grave responsibility which it involves. Think of it: We are shaping the destiny of a planet. We are not, as previously supposed, oppressed by having to do the will of a superior power. The only power that in any way controls us is the collective will of humanity, and of that we are the creators. We can mark out our own goal and choose our own path to that goal; and no power outside of ourselves can defeat the purpose of man.

This idea naturally makes man in general, — humanity, — rather than some idealized man, the object of our religious aspirations; and human beings take on an augmented significance as the immediate expression of the divine life. With this idea of deity, man no longer turns to the altar to come into direct contact with the divine life, but he experiences its light and warmth from contact with his fellow men. And this new attitude will transform all our relations with our fellows. We shall regard them henceforth as the media through which divinity is expressed, as actual revealers of the spirit of deity. We shall attribute a sacredness to them, and the cheapness which now marks the value of human life will disappear. Likewise we shall consider ourselves channels through which the divine life of humanity flows, and recognize our mission to purify the stream as it

passes through us, realizing that the manner in which we give expression to this spirit will largely determine the life of the future. Every mistake we make will be communicated to our posterity and make it more difficult for them to find the way; every virtue which we practise will likewise be transmitted to our children and will help ennoble and enrich their lives. And so I would interpret deity in terms of an idealized and glorified humanity, making this the object of worship and of service. My religion consists in a devoted attempt to realize through consecrated effort the gradual transformation of human life into its likeness. In short, I would set up the ideal of a perfected humanity as the symbol or metaphor which best expresses my idea of deity.

In all this, of course, we are at bottom dealing with speculation; we are merely wrestling with the task of comprehending and expressing some reasonable idea of the universe. Personally I affirm nothing — because I know of nothing — higher than the real but invisible influence of good men and women, both past and present. Whether or not there is any supreme mind behind that collective influence, the collective influence is there, and may be said in a very real sense to control my destiny. And though it be but another idol, I set it up as the concept of God which best meets my needs. It is because I feel that this idea of God challenges me to real experience of

his life and to real participation in his creative labors that I find myself, if not wholly convinced intellectually, moved to its acceptance.

To feel that God, the mighty spirit of humanity, needs me, is to feel myself stirred to the uttermost depths of my being. To feel that I am a part of and a contributor to that God, is to find myself lifted to the possibilities of purest and bravest life. God and man together, in fact the same, toiling and sacrificing for the perfect end — this is the picture that I love to hold in mind, because it gives me light in these hours of darkness when great things are demanded of us and we are called to heroic labors. With this conception there comes to me at times a feeling of heaven, and with it the intense longing that I may so live that posterity may have this feeling more fully and more often, in *the better world that we ourselves must make.*

THE FATHER ALMIGHTY

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Born in Mississippi in the first year of the American Civil War, Edgar Young Mullins was educated in Johns Hopkins University and the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary. A seven-year pastorate in the Lee Street Church in Baltimore was followed by a brief ministry in the First Church of Newton, Mass., when, in 1899, he was called to the presidency of the seminary where he had been a student — the largest theological school in the world. He is also president of the Baptist World-Alliance, a post of honor which he has held since 1923.

As an author, Dr. Mullins has been prolific but never prolix. An early volume asks and answers the question, *Why is Christianity True?* and another deals with *The Axioms of Religion*, while still another discusses the vexed issue of *Freedom and Authority*. A stately volume expounds *The Christian Religion in its Doctrinal Expression* — a monument of conservative thought and scholarship; and his latest work portrays *Christianity at the Cross-roads* from the same point of view.

In the essay following, a great teacher of religion talks to us familiarly, in a confessional mood and in a style all can understand, of the ultimate Reality which gives meaning to life; and one feels in his words the glow of a serene confidence which deepens with the years.

THE FATHER ALMIGHTY

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I HAVE never thought of God as a "big man with a long white beard," sitting on a throne in the sky. Even in childhood, so far as memory can recall, God was to me a personal Spirit. So far as I could picture Him I saw Him in the face of Jesus Christ.

To me God is not a finite Being. Or perhaps I should say He is both finite and infinite. He has something very human in Him. He loves; and He can resent evil. He can suffer with those who are in pain and sorrow. He is very patient with the erring. This is the finite or human side of God. But He is also an infinite Being. I cannot fully grasp the infinite; but to me it is power raised to the highest, wisdom and goodness without limit, love boundless and free.

I love to think of God as sovereign. I do not mean that He is an arbitrary despot; I mean rather that He controls my life and the affairs of the world in holy love. It is His character as loving and holy which makes me trust Him as sovereign. In hours

of weakness and sorrow and defeat, His sovereignty is the rock foundation of my hopes. There are so many other things which seem to control the world, it is the thought of God's control which saves me from despair.

God is a reasonable Being. By this I do not mean that He can be fully grasped by human reason. That would make Him finite. I mean rather that He always has a good and sufficient reason for what He does. Men used to refer to His "mere good pleasure" or His "inscrutable decree" to explain all God's ways with men. The result was that men revolted and began to reaffirm man's rights as against God. The truth is that in God's dealings with us it is never His "mere good pleasure" which moves Him. It is our own welfare under the eye of infinite love and righteousness which is the true key to the problem.

I must think of God as a free Being. I would not shut God out of the world. Men used to think of Him as a machinist who made the universe and started it, and left it alone to run down like a clock. He was merely an observer on the outside. If He took any interest it was a detached sort of interest. He might spin the world around His finger like a toy, but He took no part in its affairs.

Others would shut God into the world and lock Him in the mechanism of nature. This also

enslaves Him in another way. The highest human mind would be thus the full measure of God, because it would be the highest expression of nature. Nature is a locked system of laws and forms. God is a free Person. If nature absorbs Him, as a sponge absorbs water with no water left over, then God is locked up in nature. He would then be like a squirrel in a rotating cage. He could act only through physical or human means. It would be like Paderewski trying to play the piano with gloves on his hands. He could not express his musical genius thus. God is more than the world. He is free to communicate with man's free spirit. He has a plan and purpose running through history. We are His agents to carry out His plan.

God is training men for freedom. I think this is the key to Providence. He wants us to learn. We are very slow students. I cannot explain such a tragedy as the World War except as an instance of God's letting men learn by terrible experience the folly of selfishness and greed and war. It is a fearful price to pay; but it is better than coercing the will. Freedom is something men must learn. We must choose the way of peace and righteousness for ourselves. It cannot be imposed upon us. God's problem with man is to save him and at the same time leave him free — a greater task than creating suns and systems. We do not sympathize with

God as we should, because we forget the nature of His undertaking with man.

God is a God of grace. Grace is an old Scriptural word, very rich in meaning. It simply means love carried to the highest point. It is love "outloving" love. It expressed itself in the gift of Christ and His atoning death. It expresses itself in forgiving the sinful and receiving them unto Himself, and in the bestowment of His infinite fullness upon men so far as they are able and willing to receive it. It shows itself in infinite patience and forbearance. It expresses itself in a Divine compassion for the needy and helpless, in recreating man in His own image in moral and spiritual perfection. It also appears in the fact that God holds men to their best. He loves us too much to be satisfied with anything less than our best. The discipline is often severe, but it always yields the peaceable fruits of righteousness. God would be untrue to us if He let us off without the necessary discipline.

God's world is organized for personal ends. I cannot get any reasonable view of nature other than as a means of promoting the interests of personal and spiritual beings. Nature is like a stairway. Inorganic matter is the first step. Life is the second, as in plants. Sentient life in animals is the third. The fourth step is man, an intelligent, self-conscious, moral, and spiritual personality. Immortality is the

next step, or else the stairway leads nowhere. Men do not build stairways unless they lead to an upper story. I have seen a stone stairway leading up to nowhere after the house was burned down, but stairways are built always to lead somewhere. The universe is a stairway leading nowhere unless man is immortal.

Everything below man promotes personal ends. Our bodies are a sort of gymnasium for our spirits. Through bodily limitations we are enabled to forge our individuality. Our bodies make us struggle against appetite, indolence, ignorance, carnality. We have to achieve character by struggle. Events, natural laws, and forces serve the same purpose. They are God's appointed means for achieving character. Even in the miracles of the New Testament there is no violation of the laws of nature. They are instances of a free personal God acting in unusual ways for moral ends. Most of them were restorations of an order which man had violated, bringing nature back to the normal. Sickness is abnormal. Christ cured it and restored the normal. Hunger is not the state in which God wants His children to remain. Christ fed the hungry and restored the normal. Nearly all the miracles were restorations, not violations, of the natural order.

God's usual method is not the miracle. If so, the world would be a poor training-ground for men. A

brick falls from a wall and kills a good man. We call it an accident. But such an event serves a very high end. It shocks us into a sense of danger, makes us careful, gives us foresight, humility, and skill in meeting life's dangers. If God should by a miracle catch the falling brick to save the life of the good man, it would tend to many evils. We should become presumptuous, careless, proud, and lazy.

Men use natural law to achieve character and blessing. Its stability is like the iron bar of a trapeze. The athlete is assured that it will not break as he uses it to develop his powers.

Man's mind was made to react to nature in discovery and mastery. Modern science is the wonder of the ages. Its achievements are almost incredible. The danger of it is that it may make men proud and self-sufficient. This will lead to a closing of the soul to another universe — the spiritual, more rich in blessing than the physical.

To me the most fascinating department of science is medical research, because I think God has a very special interest in it. If there is any man on earth who has a right to pray it is the medical researcher. I think Christ's deeds and teaching show this. It is far more important from Christ's standpoint that men be relieved of disease and suffering than that we learn to fly one hundred or two hundred miles an hour. The progress already made seems to show

that the secrets for which men search in this department are in the forefront of God's interests for men.

God is revealed in Jesus Christ. He is the Everlasting Father; Jesus made this clear. He was Father of Jesus in a unique sense, manifesting His presence all along the way, even to the end in the atoning death and the resurrection from the dead. As Father, God has all the excellences known to us in an earthly father and none of the weaknesses. As Father, He is not indulgent toward sin. He seeks to recreate men in His own image and associate them together in a Kingdom of righteousness. His Fatherhood makes worship possible. If God were a mere substance or force, whether spiritual or material, we could not adore Him, or thank Him, or praise Him, or confess our sins to Him, or pray to Him, any more than we could do these things to the law or power of gravitation. Unless God is a free personal Being religion is a soliloquy, not a dialogue. Fellowship is possible only with a Being like ourselves in personal qualities.

As Father, God answers prayer. He could not be Father otherwise. Men often say that God's unchangeableness makes it impossible for God to answer prayer. I think exactly the opposite is true. He is unchangeably Father, hence He must be able to answer prayer. The very essence of earthly fatherhood is tender care and responsiveness to the child,

or wise giving in response to need. If God is merely the mechanism of nature or the driving power behind the mechanism, then He cannot be Father and He cannot answer prayer. In that case it would be like praying to a locomotive or the steam that drives it. If God cannot answer prayer He has changed from being Father to being something else. But it is because He is the Everlasting Father that He can and does answer prayer. He is self-consistent in character. He cannot deny His Fatherhood by making Himself impotent to meet the needs of His child.

I do not fully understand the Trinity. But I can easily see that God is revealed as Father and as Son and as Holy Spirit. They are, of course, not three Gods. God is One. But there is a threefold distinction in God, perhaps beyond our present ability to grasp.

God's Providence guides the individual. This is overwhelmingly convincing to the devout man who considers his life in its longer stretches. The long view of history shows the same guidance and control. We misjudge events because our sense of value and God's sense of value often conflict. We imagine that comfort, prosperity, and happiness are the true values. God thinks that moral attainment, purity, and loyalty are the true values. Men thought during the World War that the victory of the allied armies

was the supreme value. God thought that national and individual honor, integrity, and loyalty were the supreme values. It would have been better to lose the war than to lose these.

History is God's method of creating a Kingdom of Righteousness. The tragedy of it often depresses men. But the price is not too great to pay for the end to be gained — an eternal Kingdom of redeemed and holy personal beings, bound together by love. Perhaps the vastness of the universe is merely the stage for this great drama, which ultimately will require all time and all space for its unfolding. Paul says the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together, waiting for the manifestation of the Sons of God.

MY THOUGHT OF GOD

SAMUEL McCHORD CROTHERS, D.D., LITT.D.

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Samuel McChord Crothers is better known as a genial essayist than as a preacher or theologian. Those who have followed *The Gentle Reader* carrying *The Pardoner's Wallet* on his way to *Miss Muffet's Christmas Party*, or listened to his *Meditations on Votes for Women*, will be all the more eager to hear his reflections on the basic truth of faith, if only to know the backgrounds of his wisdom and his humor.

Born in Illinois in 1857, educated at Wettenberg College, Princeton University, Union Theological Seminary, and Harvard Divinity School, Dr. Crothers entered the Presbyterian ministry in 1877. Five years later he became a Unitarian, and since 1894 has been minister of the old First Church in Cambridge, at the gate of Harvard Yard, where some of us heard him in days gone by, wondering the while whether Emerson had returned to the pulpit.

In his essay Dr. Crothers makes us aware of the incommunicableness of our deepest thought and experience of God, whose greatness makes us all one in our littleness, and the wisdom of relying upon the sanity of life as a revelation; as, in *The Endless Life*, he taught us to trust the promptings of the soul in its best hours, when the fogs have lifted, as prophecies of the eternal life.

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THE word "God" differs from all others in that it stands for an idea that is essentially incommunicable. Other words may be defined. This word stands for an indestructible belief that there is something that cannot be defined. There is a reality that cannot be measured or adequately described. This is what we mean when we say that God is infinite.

All attempted definitions of Deity are confessedly only a declaration of the limitation of our own minds. The religious man declares at the outset, "Such knowledge is too wonderful for me; it is high, I cannot attain unto it." There is no room here for dogmatic complacency. One mind may be more sensitive or more comprehensive than another, but no human intelligence can comprehend all the possibilities of Being. Words like atheism, theism, pantheism, are descriptive of certain intellectual attitudes. They throw no light on the nature of God. When they become the war cries of parties they only confuse us.

But fortunately religious experience is not dependent on verbal definitions of Deity. Let us begin very modestly with Paul's thought, that we are feeling after God, if haply we might find him. This is not the mood of dogmatic assurance. It is not the assertion that we have made a full discovery. We are explorers. We are finite intelligences persistently reaching out for a reality that extends infinitely beyond us. The further we go the more we are conscious of the inconceivable vastness that lies beyond the border of our knowledge.

When someone asks me, "Do you believe in a personal God?" I have the right to turn upon my questioner and ask, "Do you? What do you mean by personality? If it is something which you know all about and which you can use as a definition, then you have the advantage of me. When you apply your definition to the Infinite it will not be satisfactory."

To me, personality is not something which I understand; it is something which I experience. It is a word which stands for what I am, and not for what I comprehend. It is that which I cannot get away from. I think, I feel, I love, I hope. But what am I? How did the atoms that compose my body awake to consciousness? Whence came this awareness of a marvelous universe, and of myself standing in the midst of it? The very fact that my awakening is

so recent and my personal experience is so brief increases the wonder. Is my power to think and feel an accident, or is it an illustration of some creative energy in the Universe itself?

Physical science has "explained" many things; but these explanations have only increased our wonder. The primal mystery deepens. Over against the physical universe stands the mind that is aware of its existence. Our only direct knowledge of mind is in ourselves, but we find it increasingly difficult to think of it as confined to ourselves. If our mind is rooted in that which is lower than itself, it relates itself also to that which it feels is higher than itself — infinitely higher. It is continually feeling after something which shall sustain it. Wordsworth's line expresses the process of spiritual growth: "So build we up the being that we are." In becoming what we are, we become conscious of our higher as well as our lower relationships. We grow out of one world and we grow into another.

When I think of that in which I live and move and have my being, and ask what it is like, it does not seem reasonable to eliminate the very thing which I find to be the greatest, and of whose reality I am most certain. Why should all the analogies be drawn from the physical experience, and none from the spiritual? I accept the idea of limitless space, limitless time, limitless energy, eternal law. There

are forces that move from everlasting to everlasting. To me the conception of a spiritual universe is just as necessary. I am unable to see any bounds to it. I only know that it is revealed in us, to each according to his ability.

If there is a spiritual reality, how can it be revealed? It is evident that it could be revealed only through the development of being capable of receiving impressions. A stone lies in the field. The sun shines upon it, flowers grow around it, the rain falls upon it age after age. But these realities are not revealed to the stone. It lies there amid the wonders of the natural world, untouched by them.

Then there emerges an organism that has powers of a different kind. It not only exists, but knows that it exists. The living creature develops capacities for motion, for feeling, for thought. And as each faculty develops it makes surprising discoveries in regard to the universe of which it is a part. Its pains and its pleasures are not confined to itself. They reveal realities of the world outside, and establish new connections with that which stretches away in every direction.

We speak of the "making of the mind." This is not merely of interest to the psychologist. The history of the making of the mind is also the history of the discovery of the real world and the mastering of its forces. Just in proportion as the man becomes

intelligent, the world becomes more intelligible. When the power of orderly thinking is developed, there is the discovery of an ordered universe. It was always there, but only now has it been revealed. Generations of dull-witted people lived in the shadow of great mountains without knowing that they were sublime. A man of finer sensibility appears, and is overwhelmed by the grandeur that is around him. It is a reality from which he cannot escape.

It is so with every quality that we recognize. What we are immediately conscious of is the sensation or impression in ourselves. But we connect it with some reality which reaches beyond ourselves. Our thought is the key which unlocks the doors of the world. There is something in us that corresponds to that which is around us, beneath us, and above us. We recognize these correspondencies in all our dealings with the physical world. We are not content to describe the image on the retina or the sensation carried by the optic nerve. We say we see something. The thing we see is as real as the mechanism of seeing.

When a man of moral insight emerges, to whom righteousness and truth are the supreme realities, he is not content with introspection. That ethical impulse that is in him is not isolated. He believes in a moral law, and he discovers moral relations. If we were merely interrogating Nature, we should hear only

the negative answer Job heard: "The depth saith, it is not in me: and the sea saith, it is not with me." But when we follow the good man through his actual experiences we find a more positive answer. The "highest, holiest manhood" is as real as the mountain or the sea. It is rooted in the nature of things. Men who have loved righteousness and spoken truth and sacrificed themselves for the common good have actually appeared upon the earth. Their testimony is to the reality of a spiritual order to which they belong. They have a sense of companionship which sustains them in their struggles.

Just in proportion as a man's own mind is purified does it reveal the existence of forces which he recognizes as divine. They lift him out of the pettiness into a region in which he can move freely. He comes to trust these forces, which are eternally operative. He finds something which answers his deepest needs.

There is a religion that is not dependent on a special revelation, because it rests on a revelation that is natural and progressive. This is what consciousness means. It is the revealing of so much of truth as we are prepared to receive. The Hebrew sage declared, "He hath set the world in their heart." How much of the world, of its beauty, of its power, of its promise, can any one of us get into his mind? Only a little part of it; but it is enough to make us

believe in the reality of that which is still beyond. It is enough to kindle our desire for fuller knowledge. When thought and feeling reach the limits of the human they point to that which is divine. There is still power. It is not the stream of love that is exhausted, it is the barriers that have given way.

Love, righteousness, truth, beauty, have been revealed to us in human lives and under human limitations. These things we have worshiped through the forms with which we are familiar. There has been a spiritual radiance by which the common life has been transfigured. All this is a part of our experience as we have been feeling after God if haply we might find Him. God must be infinitely more than the goodness which we have found and loved — but He cannot be less.

CHRIST GLORIFIED

CHARLES W. HARVEY

FIRST NEW JERUSALEM CHURCH, PHILADELPHIA

Beecher reminded us that no one can understand the progressive theology of the last century who does not know Swedenborg, whose seer-like vision influenced thought and faith more than we are aware, especially in respect to God and the future life. In other respects, too, a fellowship of mystics has been influential out of all proportion to its numbers, by virtue of its emancipating insight.

Charles W. Harvey is an Englishman by birth, educated at Oxford and at the New Church Theological School in London. Ordained to the ministry of the New Church in 1900, he taught in its Theological School in Cambridge, Mass., while serving a large parish in Brookline. Since 1910 he has been minister of the First Society of the New Jerusalem Church of Philadelphia, active in the affairs of the city and in the national convention of the Church.

There is a quality of serene beauty and penetrating insight in his essay, wherein he tells us that his thought of God is Christ glorified; and no one can read it without feeling the depth and richness of the faith so confirmed and interpreted.

CHRIST GLORIFIED

CHARLES W. HARVEY

FIRST NEW JERUSALEM CHURCH, PHILADELPHIA

WHAT is the Swedenborgian idea of God? It can be given in three words: The Christ Glorified. So much for a brief statement. To justify this faith, however, from the Scriptures and experience, requires some definite theological thought, of which most of us nowadays are rather shy. But we know of no other way to get a clear, rational, and practical idea of God for us to use, as we should, in our every activity.

This idea of the Christ Glorified as the one and only God seems to us that of the whole Scriptures, alike of Old Testament prophecy and Gospel and Apocalypse fulfillment. To the earlier promisers of the Messiah He was revealed no further than as a new David, to be the national and world King, the direct heir of the son of Jesse or a reëmbodiment of his spirit with vaster scope. Further inspiration, however, proved to the prophets that nothing but the coming of Jehovah Himself could save His people and the world. So they begin to call the people "the redeemed of the Lord,"[1] and the many

[1] Isaiah, LXII: 12.

prophecies reach their climax in tremendous promises, felt to be those of Jehovah Himself: "I looked, and there was none to help . . . therefore mine own arm brought salvation unto me." [1] "And he saw that there was no man . . . therefore, his arm brought salvation unto him . . . he put on righteousness as a breastplate and an helmet of salvation upon his head." [2]

The whole spirit and letter of the Gospels and Revelation prove to us that these prophecies were fulfilled by the historic Christ, both in His life and — especially — in His own claims, first to Divinity and toward the end to absolute Deity. Because the Lord had said to the sick of the palsy, "Thy sins be forgiven thee," the scribes said, "This man blasphemeth"; but "the Son of man hath power on earth to forgive sins." [3] The Jews threatened to stone Him, as it is said, "for blasphemy; and because that thou, being a man, makest thyself God." [4] In the same connection, though later, just before the Crucifixion, when asked if He is the Christ, He admits that He is, tacitly according to Matthew [5] and explicitly according to Mark; [6] and this again the High Priest describes as blasphemy. The claims cumulate. Early in John's record he

[1] Isaiah, LXIII: 5.
[2] *Ibid.*, LIX: 16, 17.
[3] Matthew, IX: 3.
[4] John, X: 33.
[5] Matt., XXVI: 64.
[6] Mark, XIV: 62.

says, "As the Father hath life in himself, so hath he given to the Son to have life in himself." [1] Later He says, "Before Abraham was, I am," using of Himself the most tremendous title of Jewish sacred writ. Again, "I and my Father are one"; [2] "He that hath seen me hath seen the Father." [3] And this whole progressive recognition of Himself as Jehovah Incarnate reaches its climax with the Almighty claim of His Resurrection, "All power is given unto me, in heaven and in earth." [4]

After the Ascension, the great apostle to whom the Christ revealed Himself in the Glory of His Spirit, says, "In Him dwelleth all the fullness of the Godhead bodily." [5] In the Revelation, the vision of the glorified Christ, as it is generally recognized to be, the author in spirit heard the Son of Man declare Himself by a title that can belong only to the Eternal: "I am Alpha and Omega, the first and the last"; and when the seer turns "to see the voice that spake," and recognizes "one like unto the Son of Man," He repeats, "I am the first and the last." [6]

There can be no question, then, but that the whole burden of the Scriptures in prophecy and fulfillment, the statements of Christ Himself, and those of the

[1] John, v: 26.
[2] *Ibid.*, x: 30.
[3] *Ibid.*, xiv: 9.
[4] Matt., xxviii: 18.
[5] Colossians, ii: 9.
[6] Revelation, i: 11–18.

Apostolic Church, are to the general effect that the Christ was Jehovah embodied.

We recognize, however, that there are Gospel statements which would confuse us had we no other guide than the letter. These are the ones that seem to speak of Father and Son as distinctly two, especially, perhaps, the prayers of Christ to His Father as to another Person. In discussion of these passages, Swedenborg follows the recognized Father of Christian theology, Augustine, but (as he himself also wrote) in the Latin. So doing, he corrects, retranslates, and makes explicit that basic — but, in the English, most confusing — Christian teaching, the Athanasian Creed. This states, as you remember, that there is one Person of the Father, and another Person of the Son, and another Person of the Holy Spirit, insisting, however, that they are but one God.

This creed is almost certainly drawn from Augustine's great work on the Trinity. Here the term used is the Latin word *persona*. This cannot be truly translated "person." The Latin persona had not that meaning. The word comes mostly from the usages of the stage. The persona was the character that the actor presented or embodied. An ancient play had but three persons to present perhaps a dozen characters or personæ. So Swedenborg says the one Person of God is presented by Scripture

in three elemental characters or Personæ. The Fatherhood is the character of God especially distinguished by all-embracing love or purpose. His Sonship is His character of out-reaching Divinely Human wisdom. His Holy Spirit of Life is His Divine outgoing or proceeding Influence or Power. Make the Athanasian Creed include these three personæ or forms of personality in the one Person of the Lord, the Saviour God, the Glorified Christ, and — we are taught — we restore the old creed to its basic position as true Christian doctrine.

The idea has various modern confirmations. Our human personality, the image and likeness of God, has been intensively studied by many eminent psychologists, and two of them, Doctors Morton Prince and Boris Sidis, — the latter a pupil of the late William James, — prove conclusively the existence of cases of two and more distinct and sometimes divergent personalities existing in one person.

But we all have something of this experience. It is made classic by Paul's protest: "The good that I would I do not, but the evil which I would not, that I do." Here, as we all find out to our cost, are two I's which often struggle for supremacy. Modern metaphysics distinguishes them sometimes by calling one "I" and the other "Me." The I is the higher, ideal conception of myself, which knows what I ought to do, and does not fail to remind me of the

fact! This part of us is called the "soul" in its most limited meaning. The "Me" is the lower, working, outreaching nature of us. This is what carries us through our daily activities. In a very general sense it is called the "body."

We all recognize this duality of ourselves during much of our life. But we all feel sure that the devoted pursuit of "the man I ought to be" during our earthly life will ensure that, after our resurrection to the other life, we shall become that better man; and the man we at heart did not want to be, but often felt forced into being, will be gradually sloughed off. We shall be the one person we heartily strove in the flesh to become.

Just so we think we may picture the duality of the Divine Nature during the Incarnation. Its higher ideal soul was the Divine itself, the Fatherhood. The outward, active part was the human consciousness of the Christ. This was striving throughout toward oneness with the Divine Soul. It presently became that Soul, just as we hope to become our true soul hereafter. So after His resurrection the Glorified Christ could assert with truth the great claim, "All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth." The prayers of the Son to the Father, the Human Personality to the Divine, become then similar to our colloquies with our higher self through conscience — though of course with the

difference that our higher nature is but a gift from the Divine, not divine in itself, as was that of the Christ.

To sum up thus far, the older theology took the idea of the two personalities literally as two Persons. It stressed those utterances of the Gospels which supported that literal idea. The new Christianity, as we see it, looks at the two Personalities more from the point of view of our modern metaphysics. We see them both working toward unity, as in the finite human case. So we put into their earlier Christian preëminence those statements of the Gospel which describe the progressive Oneness of this Divine Fatherhood and Sonship, through incarnation to perfect Glorification.

The result we believe to be of the very highest Christian and religious value. It gives us back the first Christian God of the Apostolic Age, the Christ-God, able at last to be conceived clearly, and simply, intelligently, followed. We have one object of both worship and imitation, our Father and Saviour, and so much more Father from having been Son and Saviour in incarnate experience. He is preëminently a Divine Human God, the glorification of manhood. This idea makes our whole Christian duty and wonderful privilege simply to consist in being all the man He made us to be, each one according to the powers and opportunities He gives us, our imitation of His wonderful Manhood on earth. "As [a man] thinketh

in his heart, so is he." If we have not clear thought of God in our minds, we feel we cannot do His will whole-heartedly in life.

Regarding God as Creator, Swedenborg takes us direct to the Gospels, especially that of John. He finds that evangelist inspired to recognize and pass on clear ideas as to the two elements in the Godhead. They are named "God" and "the Word." God is evidently Jehovah, the All-Fatherhood; by implication, the all-embracing love, purpose, or will side of His Being. And — we are taught — it is a basic characteristic of love to go out of itself. "The Word" was the Greek term for the Wisdom of God, His essentially human side or personality. It was the outreaching, planning Wisdom which devised a universe of things and men for the Divine love to bless. So everything we know has something of His Divinely Human touch or quality: man supremely so, and, less and less definitely, the animals and plants and minerals. They are all devised for the one end, to aid man in becoming the highest human creature of God, the most perfect, self-conscious, receiving instrument, to take freely and return, as of Himself, the Divine love and life. So the Gospel says that "the Word was God," or more literally, "God was the Word" by whom were all things made, and without whom was not anything made that was made.

How then do we conceive that this Word, or Divinely Human Wisdom of God, made all things? With the old theology, out of nothing? No; Swedenborg says, out of Himself. He shows God to be the one infinite substance, form, and force of Life — spiritual, of course, and only thence material. But God is primarily all-embracing Love, the Divine desire, purpose, and effort to make and bless. Is this Divine Love, then, actual Substance, spiritual indeed but still actual, substantial? That is our teaching.

When the idea was first offered by Swedenborg it doubtless seemed fanciful in the extreme. Nowadays Science is giving us various analogies, helping us to bring the forces of the spirit and those of the body into closer connection. For instance, hydrogen and oxygen are two gases of hardly perceptible materiality. Combine them in a certain way and they form water, a substance entirely different in quality and of a lower degree of materiality. Again, the doctors tell us that our anger, which is an aberration of the spirit, actually creates a toxin in the blood, a physical thing which they can take out and analyze, something which may actually poison the whole physical body. So, on the other hand, happiness, confidence, assurance of God and His Providence, the doctors tell us again, create new substances in the blood which make their medicines

more effective, and the absence of which may prevent cure by the same medicine in persons lacking this spiritual substance. The discovery is the basis of much of our modern psychotherapy. If a man can create physical things out of his own spiritual substance, his desires or purposes, how much more can God?

Our idea of God the Creator, then, is of Him as the Fount of all substance, which is spiritual substance. This substance is ever going forth from Him, as are heat and light from the sun. It combines and recombines, step by step, through lower and lower degrees of spiritual substance down toward the material. In its progress it loses more and more of its inherent life and force, down gradually to quiescence or inert mass. One of the first transmutations is into the atmosphere of the spiritual world. One of the next lower is into the substance of our souls and the soul, so-called, — that is, the inner life, — of all other things. This life is self-conscious in man, conscious and instinctive, more and less, in animals, plants, and earths. In short, this spiritual substance or inner life-effort is what we all recognize as the very spirit of life in all created objects. By lower combinations and recombinations this elemental spiritual substance becomes that of our bodies and all other material things.

Now, for our part, we find it very hard to think of

everything as made from nothing. It seems to us simpler, more rational, to think of all things as being made from the very Substance of our Divine Father Himself. It seems more like the ways of a God of law and order, more analogous with the physical making of our own bodies, from our souls, through our parents. This idea that we are made and continually being remade thus by and from God Himself, the Divinely-Human All-Father and Saviour, also brings Him very close to us and us to Him. It gives that touch of nature which makes us all akin. It makes all created things, as Saint Francis called them, our little brothers. It means, of course, that we would cease to live should He cease any moment to give us life.

In the making of man and all things, then, did the Lord begin at the bottom, with the lowest life-effects produced from the atmospheres spiritual and natural, the gradually solidifying earths, thence the planets, thence the animals, and finally man? Did He evolve one from another? In short, is evolution true? Not impossibly, if by evolution we mean Divine evolution; if every step in the progress is recognized as dependent originally — and nowadays just as much — on direct Divine guidance and ever reiterating creative acts. Qualify the scientific theory of evolution in this way, and we have no quarrel with it.

If we admit evolution only as a possible method of God's creation, both in the beginning and at all times, it may be helpful. It may help to clear away the idea of God as an arbitrary worker of miracles by His mere fiat. It may help us to see Him as a Being of order and law, working always by successive steps — for example, the allegorical days of Creation. It may also enforce the true idea of man as a creature always developing, materially, mentally, spiritually. Conceived of in this way, the evolutionary hypothesis would not seem to contradict Scripture, nor do we find it in itself antagonistic to our idea of God.

This same Divinely Human side of God or the Word, which created us, St. John's Gospel is also explicit in saying was that part of God which was "made flesh" and so redeemed us.

As to the second great work of God, the Redemption, Swedenborg is specific in simply accepting and expounding Gospel records. If God is admitted to be the one Source and Administrator of all life, without whom was not anything made that was made, there is no difficulty in the conception of His making this Divinely Human element in Himself flesh by the Virgin Birth. The Divine force of life, which by combination and recombination produces all the effects of existence, from the most gigantic to the most minute, can surely be conceived of as creating an initiament of human life in the only manner in

which it could be born among men to exemplify perfect humanity. This would have been impossible if the form of life had been created through finite human paternity. "He saw that there was no man" — no man then or ever capable of fathering ideal humanity, and humanity especially needed at that time to meet accumulated human evil and show how to master it.

However largely we conceive of the All-Father of the universe, is it difficult to think that when He finds one of His worlds astray He will regard it as worth saving, even at unique cost, a lost sheep worthy to be sought till He should find it? Would any human father do less for a wayward child? As the records show, He had tried precept in vain. Now He must try example. He must show man by actual embodiment the kind of life we were meant for: not self-seeking, which can never give us full satisfaction, but unselfish, in love and understanding and service one of another, embodying each our own reflection of the infinite love and wisdom and beneficence of God.

We believe, then, that the Apostle was right: "God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself." [1] He was not, as the old Christianity thought, reconciling the world to another Person, but to Himself, as the embodiment — as full as was possible

[1] II Corinthians, v: 19.

in a finite human form — of the Divine All-Fatherhood. Accepting this idea of the Redemption and the Atonement or At-one-ment, we can follow Swedenborg as he tries to clear away the clouds of mediæval Christian teaching as to imputation, substitution, and the like, to reveal afresh the Lord Himself as our one Redeemer. We see God in the flesh exemplifying the true life of man. He showed how it could and should be the joyous, satisfying development of our better nature, our God-given powers for material and spiritual service one of another, to make heaven here and lead us to heaven hereafter. We see Him offering this ideal of life to all who will accept it, and providing for its being offered increasingly over the world. We see Him offering the only possible reconciliation of man with Himself, then and thenceforward, namely, that man fulfill the glorious testimony for which he was created, love — love of his fellows and thence of his God. From being Father He became the perfect Son, and so also the more perfect Holy Spirit or universal Influence and Power for the true life of man and of everything that lives.

As to this final character of God, the Regenerator, we find that the first Pentecost shows the beginning of a new relation. As we saw, the Divine Spirit had become newly defined and intensified as the Divinely Human Spirit of the Christ Glorified. Its first

religious effect was the inducing of a simple, loving belief in Christ as God, though few had Saint Paul's vision of Him as "the fullness of the Godhead bodily." All felt, however, that He was in some way God; that they should worship Him, as Pliny describes them doing; and that they should follow Him in unselfish, loving brotherhood, with Him as their one Master.

But Christian love declined; worldly love increased; and the simple idea of the Christ-God became clouded. The three Personæ of Augustine had been defined with crass literalness as three separate Persons, One taking the punishment of human sin to satisfy the Other's wrath and to free all men who would confess this belief. The effect at first was blind obedience to the Church, later grudgingly given when its officials were evil-living men. Still later came the idea of faith alone; that you might live as you pleased and buy your salvation; or, if unable, be sure of it at last by deathbed confession of Christ. The Church lost hold. All its historians record its deadness, culminating in the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries in skepticism, disbelief, and licentiousness. Many felt the need for some new dispensation: for some new vision of the God-Man to make men more godly. Efforts became apparent in various parts of the world for a more direct approach to the Spirit of God. These

appear, for example, in Pietism on the Continent of Europe, and Quakerism in England and this country, especially perhaps in the Wesleys, who tried valiantly to lead men to the Lord more directly than through the devious ways of the then theology and priestcraft.

But the world of religious thought was even more in need of clearing from its clouds of misconception, all supposedly justified by the letter of Scripture. There was need for a new vision of the spirit of the Scriptures and of the new Christianity that could be built on them, rightly understood. The agent chosen for this thought clearance, as we believe, was Emanuel Swedenborg, the great Swedish scientist, philosopher, and later theologian, of the eighteenth century. The goal of his studies in physics and biology gradually became that of trying to find the nature of the human soul. At fifty-seven, and thenceforward till his death at the age of eighty-four, he believed — and we believe — that he was granted open vision into the world of the Hereafter, the world of the soul. His training enabled him to understand and describe impartially what he saw there exemplified. His great aim was fulfilled. He actually *saw* the true nature of the soul, and the true Being of the Saviour-God and their right relations. Why Swedenborg? Why Washington or Lincoln? The answer is the same: because their minds and

providential training fitted them better than other men, each for his task.

Swedenborg found that the true relations of God and man were made plain in the old sources of enlightenment, the Holy Scriptures of promise and of Gospel, when these were read in their spirit and life. He was led to feel that in this spirit of the Scriptures, seen afresh and disclosing anew the One Saviour God, the Promise was fulfilled spiritually: "They shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory," that is, the Lord's Second Coming. It meant, he said, that He was beginning to come again, not in the flesh this time, for that would have been unavailing, but in Spirit, to the souls of all who would receive Him. He was coming not in the literal clouds, but through the mental ones which had hidden Him.

So we believe He is now coming afresh, more forcefully in the Spirit within us than when He came in the flesh; coming to the real, inner man — the understanding and love and following of all who will welcome Him. We believe we see signs of His New Coming in the new spirit of humanness that has been evident and growing in all the departments of life for the last one hundred and fifty years. This effort to increase the worthy fellowship and resourcefulness of humanity is an implicit, if not always explicit, worship and following of Divine Humanity.

We as a Church, then, are here to welcome the Son in this His Coming in Spirit, and to further the effort for a truer conception and practice of human life in imitation of its Divinely Human Source. We are trying to welcome Him in the worship of thought, word, and life, as the One Christ God; our beneficent Creator; our ever blessed Redeemer; the new, Divinely Human, regenerating Spirit of Life, for this manifestly new and favored age.

MY CONCEPTION OF GOD

EDWARD SCRIBNER AMES, D.D.

UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO

Edward Scribner Ames was born in Wisconsin in 1870, educated at Drake University and the Yale Divinity School, with graduate studies in philosophy. Since 1900 he has been pastor of the University Church of the Disciples of Christ, Chicago; and since 1918 associate professor of philosophy in the University of Chicago. His best-known book is *The Psychology of Religious Experience*, in which he did pioneer work in the interpretation of group psychology in its religious implications. Other books widely read are *The Higher Individualism* and *The New Orthodoxy*.

Preacher, teacher, philosopher, Dr. Ames represents the pragmatic point of view in Christian thinking, as the essay here to be read attests in a brilliant manner. No doubt to some the conception of God expounded in his essay will seem more like a cosmic Santa Claus, or a glorified Uncle Sam, than the God to whom their thought is accustomed; but it is an angle of insight to be taken into account in our search for a satisfying interpretation of the Truth that makes all other truth true.

MY CONCEPTION OF GOD

EDWARD SCRIBNER AMES, D.D.

UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO

My idea of God is the idea of the personified, idealized whole of reality. If man and his works are included in the conception of nature, then God is the personification and idealization of nature. In that view nature is not set off as the realm of mere weather, or of dead matter, or of blind force, but is qualified by the living forms which appear in her, including man and his life of thought and feeling. The personification of the world is in this case not an arbitrary addition of an entirely foreign element, but the enlargement and emphatic recognition of that aspect which is felt by human beings to be most important and most real. God is thus for me actual, objective; but he is also near and intimate.

It is not difficult to pray to God. Prayer is natural and spontaneous conversation, easy and familiar when life runs smoothly, anxious and searching when trouble comes. As in conversation with a man I try to get his point of view and to see as he sees, so in prayer I find that habit operative. I try to see my problem as a wise, unbiased mind would see it. The

very attitude of prayer implies this effort to attain rapport, just as talking with a friend involves sharing what I try to know to be his thought. Into the idea of God go all the factors which I imagine to belong to ideal personality — wisdom, kindliness, power, informality, charm, mystery, orderliness, beauty, and whatever else may be demanded. The sense of such a being has been about me from my infancy, inherited no doubt from my pious parents, but also from the common thought of the general culture in which I was nourished. The men who wrote the Psalms and the men who wrote our great literature impress me as having had such an intimate and vital sense of God.

Upon reflection, I have come to think that my idea of God is analogous to my idea of my Alma Mater. She is a benign and gracious being toward whom I cherish deep gratitude for her nurture and her continuing good will and affection. She received me in my tender years and led me through wonderful ways of learning and happy comradeships of youth. When I return to her halls or forgather with her sons elsewhere, we sing songs in her praise and pledge to her our continuing devotion. She is not a mere imaginary being, but has objective and tangible reality. Part of her is earth, the solid ground she stands on; part of her is brick and mortar; part of her is gold or bonds in banks; part of her is human

— trustees, faculty, alumni, students, and supporting friends; part of her is the lore of the world, in her libraries; part of her is a tradition of ideals and memories, an airy thing of song and story. She has a character which is so well defined that we know at once whether certain policies would be in keeping with her spirit. The thought of her comforts and inspires me, as it may at times rebuke and challenge me. She reminds me of standards to be maintained, and she shares with me, as with all her children, whatever good name or fame she achieves.

My idea of Uncle Sam is of the same character. Certainly it would be a great error to identify Uncle Sam with the drawing which the cartoonist makes, or with the paper picture setting forth his quaint form and visage. Uncle Sam is the personified reality known also as the United States of America. This reality is made up of all the domains, mountains, plains, forests, highways, cities, citizens, traditions, institutions, and whatever else belongs to the nation. Uncle Sam is a recognized personal entity. He is morally responsible. He legislates and negotiates. He deliberates, makes plans, executes his will, builds great works, employs servants, and holds the power of life and death over millions of people. In the last ten years he has grown immensely rich and has become more than ever a world figure.

In similar fashion God is the personified reality of

the world. He is not a mere idea; He has substance, energy, power. He is the common will, the spirit of mankind; He is seen in men, especially in their benevolent corporate life. His image marks the humblest souls, and is more clearly revealed in the great leaders and saviours of the race. It was no theological dogma but a simple fact, true in some measure of every man, that was expressed in the saying of Jesus, "He that hath seen me hath seen the Father." It is upon the character of the individuals we know that we construct our conceptions of the ideal personages of our faith. The most orthodox contention that it is important to believe that the Son conforms to the nature of the Father, is valid only if we first establish the nature of the Father from knowledge of the Son.

I have been interested to discover that the history of the idea of God shows it to be of this nature. The pattern in which it is woven is the pattern of the life of the people, of their social organization, largely fashioned in their interaction with their environment. In the lower stages of culture the totem objects are species of animals and plants; the chief spirits are those things in which are felt to center the issues of life. Rice-growing tribes have rice gods; fishing tribes have fish gods; the Toda ceremonials focus on the buffaloes; many American Indian ceremonials have to do with maize. "There

are no rice gods where there is no rice; there are no tiger gods where there are no tigers." The early Hebrews were shepherds and their great feast was the Passover. When the social organization is developed, it is reflected in the character of the gods. A king on earth calls for a king on high; warrior kings trust in warrior gods; peaceful kings revere peaceful gods. There is always a communal nature about the gods. The fortunes of the tribe are the fortunes of its god. Thus in the Old Testament the names Israel and Jehovah are used almost synonymously. When the nation won a battle, it was a victory for Jehovah. When nations were conquered, their gods were made vassals of the conqueror. If a people was destroyed, its god disappeared, or at best lived only in myth and legend.

While the patterns of the divine beings are human and earthly, yet there is present an idealizing tendency in the minds of men, which magnifies the gods into superheroic size and power. Their prowess in battle is miraculous, their wisdom is clairvoyant, their life is immortal. Hence the gods are normally superior to the people and represent their traits in magnified and impressive proportions. When groups within the national life advance beyond the common level of intelligence and morality, as was true of the philosophers in Greece and of the prophets of Israel, then the gods change for these progressive groups and

are correspondingly refined and idealized. This process continues throughout the history of civilization. God, to Jesus and the early Christians, embodied a new measure of compassion and of concern for his children, regardless of race or moral status. The individual had gained greater dignity and value. In our time the struggle still goes on between the older and the newer ideals of social justice. In the midst of such confusion and stress it is difficult to recognize clearly the divine will, for "we behold the face of God reflected in troubled waters."

Considering these facts and related problems, I have come to believe in God as growing and as finite. The traditional teaching has insisted upon a perfect and changeless deity, but that teaching has never been able to reconcile such perfection with the evil in the world. In my view, man's intelligence and the human social order represent growing points in the real world. This is a phase of "emergent evolution"; and if God is the personified, idealized order of reality, he himself shares in this development. There are obviously conflicts, warfares, between the idealistic trends and the concrete evils of existence, and men are summoned to fight in the armies of the Lord. But if the battle is unaffected by their blood and struggle it becomes a sham battle, most tragic and hideous. I believe men may be co-workers with God in moral and spiritual enterprises. There is

tang and urgency in tasks which dip into the real world. But if the perfect thing is already existent, waiting only for the fiat of its own inscrutable decrees to work its miracles, then the human drama becomes a mere shadow picture on the walls of fate.

Sharing in the creative process, even in the slightest degree, gives men moral responsibility from which, on the other assumption, they are inevitably excused. Exhortations to participate in a moral order already prearranged and inevitably destined to arrive at its goal, sound formal and unreal. They do not seem to justify so small a thing as a passive "conversion." To conceive God as the Common Will, experimenting through the deliberations and ventures of social organizations and incarnating himself in institutions, gives him concreteness and accessibility. Professor Coe, expounding the idea that God is love, says: "Where is God? Wherever a mature man or a little child faces the problem of the mutual adjustment of two or more human lives to each other, there he meets God." [1]

A growing God must also be finite; but that does not mean small or negligible. God is vast with the vastness which modern science discovers in the starry spaces and the æons of time, and with the majesty which Kant beheld in the heavens above and the moral law within. The attributes of infinite

[1] *Social Theory of Religious Education*, p. 112.

wisdom, power, and goodness — omniscience, omnipotence, and absolute perfection — can be understood as honorific expletives expressing affection, reverence, and devotion, but not as comprehensible statements of fact. It is very common in human speech to employ superlatives to express measureless admiration and loyalty. Thus we speak of a "perfect lady," of a "divine poet," of a "spotless life." Much more therefore is it to be expected that the descriptive terms applied to God should be of the highest and the best.

A serious obstacle in appreciation of this genetic and social interpretation of God is the long-standing disparagement of human nature and all its works. Since the time of Plato man has been regarded as of the earth earthy. The divine has been thought of as celestial and purely spiritual. Whatever goodness and nobility appeared in man's thought or achievement has been credited to the spark of godliness with which he was miraculously endowed from a remote and different order of being. Although this conception has largely determined the theological thinking of the Church, especially the doctrine of conversion, it is not primarily a Christian conception, and is not found in the teaching of Jesus. He taught that men are by nature children of God and capable of natural goodness. He had no inferiority complex about human nature. Modern

psychology does not discover inherent evil in man, but recognizes the possibility of training the child's plastic being into good habits and conduct. "Salvation by education" is more and more the method of religious nurture, and this implies fundamental respect for the capacities of original human nature and its modifiability in the direction of the good and the beautiful. Consequently a new respect and reverence begin to be felt for the achievements and for the ideals of men.

My idea of God involves the acceptance of personification and anthropomorphization as natural and legitimate. This undoubtedly makes religious ideas akin to poetry and places them in the realm of art, but it does not on that account make them untrue or ineffective. Because they are vivid, personal, and dramatic they stir the imagination and the emotions and energize the will to practical tasks. The true ends of religion are the building of a better social order — in religious phrase, the Kingdom of God, and the enjoyment through imagination of that Kingdom as if already accomplished. Here again it is necessary to realize that the discrediting of such personification and dramatization is due to a long traditional insistence upon sensuous and imaginative experience as bound up with the physical, "fleshly" influences of the body. The prevailing philosophy of churchmen has discounted the

senses and the imagination, and exalted by an unwarranted assumption of their separability the pure reason and pure spirit. Psychology does not justify such a cleavage between sense and reason. Most of our thinking even about the most ideal concerns goes on in the warm, colorful terms of personal, social imagery. It is doubtful whether the most abstract reasoning wholly escapes it. All thought is symbolic, and if science seeks to use the more abstract symbols, religion certainly employs the most lively and personal forms. In the devotional literature of hymns and prayers God is addressed and communed with, quite in the character of a magnified and glorified person. Even "liberal" hymnbooks, which strive to overcome the extreme imagery of the popular songs, present the interesting spectacle of singing praises to Justice and Liberty and Faith and Love in words which are still thoroughly anthropomorphic. The great hymn, "O Love that will not let me go," is an example. Religion tends to speak the language of the heart, which is the language of friends, lovers, children, and parents.

Those recent writers, therefore, seem to me mistaken who hold that the consistent thing for intelligent people to do is to give up the idea of God. They have not given up the term "matter" because the physicists have taught them a new conception in terms of electrons and radioactivity. They do not

give up the word "government" because the world has lately changed by great revolutions from monarchies to democracies. Professor Otto has advocated lately with persuasive plausibility the reinterpretation and retention of the word "soul," in spite of his sympathy with the general position of the scientists who have discarded it from psychology. It is rather surprising to discover this careful thinker championing the continued use of the soul while arguing in the same book for the dismissal of God! Religion is primarily concerned with social values, and these reside in personal relations which are idealized and symbolized in love to God. But the love of God, whom we have not seen, gets its substance and meaning from the love of our brother whom we have seen.

My idea of God, it will be plain, is not that which the mystics usually profess. They deny the validity of our imagery and of our thought when employed to represent or understand deity. Because our thinking is finite and relative, it is for them inapplicable to God. Therefore they resort to intuition as an avenue of assurance above the plane of sense and reason. Undoubtedly they have real and vivid experiences, but they are not psychologically different from those which lovers and patriots display. Mysticism is an attempt at an explanation of the mystery of religion by denying the power of the

human mind to make explanations in the realm of religious experience! It arose in a pre-scientific age, and continues to make its claim on the basis of its rejection of the validity of science in its field. It is surprising that this should still be the resort of minds which seek to understand and vitally interpret religion in an age whose thinking is so largely dominated by scientific methods. The earnestness and the emotional experience of the mystics cannot be questioned, but it is the doctrine and not the experience which constitutes it mystic*ism*.

It is far more satisfying to me to recognize that human beings are born into a personal relationship; that they attain the essentially human traits through interaction with groups of persons; that their minds are so shaped and fashioned in conversation that it is with difficulty and the most arduous training that they ever approximate genuinely "abstract" thinking, and then only in a very limited field of reflection, and only for short periods of the day; that in their families and among their friends and as members of social organizations they are living in vivid personal ways and thinking in the imagery of persons; and that in religion they tend to dramatize their relation to Life itself, and to regard themselves as in communion with the great heart of the world, humanized and personified in the character of God.

My idea of God enhances for me a sense of friendliness in the universe, which often extends to Nature in her most physical aspects. I get sometimes the "sense of presence" which Wordsworth felt. The approval of conscience in important decisions, the reality of an ideal companionship in devotion to a new or an unpopular cause, encouragement in adherence to plans unexpectedly deferred, confidence in hoping for the recovery of loved ones from illness or an attitude of acceptance when death comes, are often felt as gifts of God. The world is so complex, and every deed carries such a wealth of implications that, when for the time being I have done all I can, I find comfort and the mood of a "half holiday" in leaving the case with God.

It is obvious that such an idea of God is not capable of logical proofs and cannot be established or imposed by argument, yet it is not fanciful nor subjective. It is like the idea of life itself, which is not demonstrable, yet carries the form and substance of immediate, indubitable experience. It has the appeal of known and felt reality; for the idea of God is the personified idealization of just this experienced reality. The more this reality is known and described by science the richer and more adequate it is possible to make that personification and idealization, and the more the idea serves to release and quicken the imagination. The idea dramatizes our

moral values, and provides a setting and a scale commensurate with the felt importance of our most ideal endeavors.

The idea of God is not the source of religion, nor is belief in it the sole test of religious experience. Religion arises out of the will to live, and its symbols spring from the projective, creative energy of the imagination. The idea of God reveals the form and the direction which that energy takes, and guides and sustains its fulfillment. Therefore the idea changes from one culture to another, yet continues through history, and sums up for any age or group the spiritual forces and ideals of our human faith and hope.

THE ETERNAL SPIRIT

FRANCIS J. McCONNELL, D.D., LL.D.

BISHOP OF THE METHODIST CHURCH, PITTSBURGH

Born in Ohio fifty-four years gone by, educated in Ohio Wesleyan University and Boston University, Francis John McConnell entered the Methodist ministry in 1894. After several pastorates in New England, he went to the New York Avenue Church, Brooklyn, in 1903, from which he was called to the presidency of De Pauw University in 1909. Three years later he was elected a bishop of the Methodist Chruch, and has won a unique place in American Christianity, both as a thinker and as a leader, his influence extending far beyond his own communion.

Among many books by Bishop McConnell, none is more helpful than his essay on *Religious Certainty*, unless it be his lectures on *Living Together*. In *The Preacher and the People* and *Public Opinion and Theology* he has to do with the problems of the pulpit, while in *The Diviner Immanence* and *Is God Limited?* he deals with the form which the thought of God takes in the mind of our time. In the following essay a great Christian teacher and leader talks to us as he might talk to a friend at his fireside, and no one could ask for a franker or more gracious guide along the dim paths whereby man finds his way to God.

THE ETERNAL SPIRIT

BISHOP FRANCIS J. McCONNELL, D.D., LL.D.

PITTSBURGH, PENN.

I THINK of God first of all as a Spirit, and of His relation to the world as that of spirit to body. I do not mean that I think of the material universe as the body of God, but that I conceive of the Divine Spirit as active in all parts of the universe, as a man's will is active in his body. At least, the control of a man's will over his body seems to me to give a hint of the power of the Divine Spirit over the world. I do not pretend to understand this in any strictly intellectual sense, but for myself I find it easier to think of Spirit as superior to matter than to think of matter as superior to Spirit.

I think of God as Mind, not because I see specific marks of design in the world, but because I find the world intelligible at all. The world outside of myself flashes messages to me, some of which I can read. If mind can read these messages, Mind must have written them. They cannot be just imprints on a passive tablet. My mind might conceivably be such a tablet, but it would have to cease to be passive if it read off the message on the tablet. Pictures

of a world outside of myself might indeed be printed on the retina of my eye, but a picture could never see itself; only an active mind could see the picture. If my mind is receiving messages, the messages must come from some other mind. I find it impossible to believe that messages which come from stars and flowers and seas and lands and cities are just fancies which I am saying over and over to myself. If the world of things and of men speaks to me, it means to me that the language of things and of men is intelligible to me because things and men and I myself are expressions of a Mind of whose intelligence the universe is an utterance. I do not mean by this that I ever hope to understand all that the Mind is saying; but that I can understand anything makes it easier for me to believe that the universe is the expression of Mind than that it is the expression of anything which is not Mind.

I think of God as moral. In interpreting this moral life of God I try to conceive of God in the highest moral terms at my command. It seems to me one of the glories of the Old Testament that the Hebrews increasingly conceived of their Lord as one of whom they could make moral demands. They no sooner got an insight into what the moral law demanded of them as men than they insisted that the same moral law was binding upon God. In an Old Testament narrative Abraham is represented as approaching God

with the challenge: "Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?" Whatever the right is, that the Judge of all the earth must do.

To say what the right is for God in a particular situation is beyond us, but we can get some glimpses of what moral requirement would mean even for a Divine Being. To take just one feature of the moral life rightly stressed in current thinking, we may speak of moral responsibility in the use of power. There is to-day increasing emphasis on the obligation of any possessor of power to use that power for the highest and largest outcome, the outcome being stated in terms of the best life for moral beings. A king may not use his kingdom for personal purposes. A business man may not run his business as he pleases — unless he pleases to take account of the growing sense of the worth of persons as ends, and not merely as means. Without any purpose of irreverence at all, we may say that God may not run the universe as he pleases, in any arbitrary, personal sense. There was a time when men, thinking of God as Feudal Lord, or King, or Governor, endowed him with arbitrary sovereignty. That day is gone — or passing. If moral bonds mean anything for us they must mean everything for God. In other words, if we are to conceive of a moral God at all, we must conceive of Him as the most obligated being in the universe. Again,

speaking without irreverence, we can hardly conceive of God as possessing any considerable "personal privileges."

This does not mean that any of us have a right to tell God what to do. It merely means that we are to have faith in Him as a responsible Moral Being. If we are going to believe in a God at all, we may as well believe in a God whom we can respect. It was President Eliot, I believe, who once said that to be a true father a man must be even more anxious to win and hold the respect of his children than their love. It is not to be supposed that Dr. Eliot was disparaging parental love. It is more likely that he was seeking to make clear that the only kind of family affection worth having is that founded on the mutual repect of parents and children. So with God. We seek a God whom we can respect and trust. We seek One in whose hands we believe that the forces of the universe are safe. If we are to think of God as a Father of moral purpose toward his children, we do not indeed require One who will explain everything to us. We cannot now receive such explanation. We could not with our present mental grasp understand it if it were blazed across the face of the sky, any more than some of us could understand the binomial theorem even if it were written in letters of miraculous fire. We can however ask that the God of Power and Knowledge use both for moral

purposes — purposes in which moral persons, whatever they are and wherever they are, shall be used always as ends and never as mere instruments.

Where does love come into all this? It does not come; it is already there, founded as moral purpose, and rising out of moral purpose. Divine Love is not to be construed in terms of cosmic amiability, as if the universe went about with a silly smile on its face. The fatherhood that reveals itself always in smiles is not of the highest type. Earnestness and seriousness of purpose toward the moral uplifting of men — this is Christian love. Large willingness to forgive and forget, of course; large helpfulness, that recks not the cost; large bestowals of life beyond any possibility of actual desert — all this is implied in the idea of a God of Love, but moral purpose must rule every pulsation of the Divine affection. God must Himself be in the moral battle, to help men up to moral likeness with Himself. The universe must be construed at least partly as a struggle. The inane optimism that before the Great War found in evolution a magician's voice, speaking us all into higher blessedness almost in spite of ourselves, is gone. We find ourselves in a race between moral education — to adapt the word of Wells — and catastrophe, with God Himself the most deeply concerned spectator. Without subscribing to current doctrines of what is called the Finite God, we

may say that God Himself is in the moral struggle, the Leader of all in self-sacrificing effort, the Hero of all advance toward the things that are true and beautiful and good.

This all seems rather general, I know, but it can be stated in the concrete terms which are the distinctive mark of Christianity. I think of God as Christ-like. I have not the slightest desire to raise any technical theological questions about Christ, but let us ask ourselves this one question: If God could conceivably come into human conditions, what life would we most desire to have Him live? What character in human history would we pick out as His ideal? I am aware how grotesque a question this will seem to some minds, but let us make the assumption, grotesque as it may seem. The philosopher will say, I know, that it is inconceivable that God could have experiences as a man could. I repeat that I am not talking philosophy. I am not urging the slightest trace of formal theology on my readers. Just let us ask, If God could live a human life, what kind of life would it be?

If the critic will be patient long enough to make the assumption, even he will probably answer that the highest we could conceive for such a God would be that He should live as Christ lived. We admit that this conception of God throws little detailed light on our sadly baffling and perplexing daily problems.

There is nothing more futile than to seek to solve particular problems of conduct by asking, "What would Jesus do?" if we mean by the question to ask what in detail He would do. We know very little of what He actually did. The question, however, throws a great light if we wish to put ourselves in the proper moral temper and mood. We are not so much concerned to know the meaning of the specific events of human life as to know the spirit in which they are brought upon us. We are not so anxious to know just the reason for every happening as we are to know how to make the events of our lives tolerable. We are able to put up with many happenings that we do not understand, if we can feel that they come about through a Christ-like spirit in the Being back of all things.

To put my question in another way: Suppose the throne of the universe to become vacant, and suppose we were asked to vote for a Ruler of the universe. This is another grotesque supposition, of course. The immediate reply is that no man could be conceived of as great enough to rule the universe. Suppose, then, we change the question to make it seem a little less fantastic. If the throne of the universe were to become vacant, and if we could be consulted as to the type of spirit morally imperative for whatever Being was to rule, what would we say? What could we say, except that

we desire the Christ-like spirit in a Ruler of the universe?

Leaving aside now all theologies that have to do with theories of the Incarnation, I repeat that I believe in the Christ-like God. Most readers who will look upon these words would agree that Christ is the highest moral ideal for men. I believe that He is also the highest ideal for God. If it is morally binding for men to live up to the Christ in themselves, I trust that I may be pardoned for saying that I think it is morally binding on God to live up to the Christ in Himself.

Is n't this rather far-fetched, this giving Christ such significance for God? Would it not be better just to follow Christ as the ideal man without regard to His meaning for God?

The difficulty here is a discouragement which settles down upon our wills if we try to follow Christ just as an ideal for ourselves. If we make serious effort, sooner or later the question arises as to whether the effort is worth while or not. The blighting doubt keeps recurring: "What 's the use? If all the universe is against us, what is the use of struggling? If the universe is indifferent, what is the use?" Of course there may be fine, rare souls who will defy the universe. Looking forward to the darkest of outcomes, with night coming on after unavailing struggle, they still profess themselves

able to greet adversity with a cheer. Not so the mass of men. The most of men are not over-eager to receive any kind of reward for seeking after moral excellence, but they do not like to feel that they are fighting single-handed, or with the odds hopelessly against them. Let them be convinced that the Christ-spirit rules in all the ongoings of the universe of which they are a part, and they will cheerfully fight on till the end of the day. Most men want to feel that their work counts for something. This is a noble motive. It gets its chance if we can think of God as Christ-like.

In other words, we need inspiration if we are to live lives that are worth while. The ideal of the manhood of Christ is in itself felt by multitudes of men as good in itself. To make real that ideal, however, is so exacting a task that the aid of the universe itself is requisite. We know of course that we must follow the ideal on its own account, but it is a vast help to be able to feel that the ideal holds for the Power back of the universe. The situation here is somewhat akin to that of the inquiring scientist. We know that scientists ought to seek knowledge on its own account, but science would soon lose its springs of enthusiasm if the scientists should come to feel that their knowledge did not hold good for more than a limited sphere; if they should come to feel that they could never light upon principles good throughout

the material universe. Science is in search for keys that will unlock doors of knowledge. If there are no doors, or if the doors open upon sheer nothingness, science will soon become the aim of very few.

How can I prove all this? I cannot prove it. I arrive at the thought of a Christ-like God by putting the best possible construction on the universe. If science or philosophy or anything else could really prove that there is no God, I should have in all honesty to accept the verdict; but science and philosophy cannot prove there is no God. It is open to me, then, to interpret the universe with the largest measure of faith possible to me. I began my conscious life in a spirit of trust. I had to take parents, friends, and the world itself, on faith. Doubt is not possible as a settled habit of effective life. If I began by doubting everything, I could never get anywhere. Doubt has its place, but its place becomes manifest whenever worthy reason for doubt appears. If persons or things deceive me, I am justified in thereafter doubting.

I do not mean, by "putting the best possible construction on the universe," an easy-going acquiescence in things as they are. I do not mean calling things black when they are white, or true when they are false, or beautiful when they are ugly, or easy when they are hard. I mean, by putting the best

construction on the universe, the belief that right and truth and beauty are the very stuff of which the universe consists, and that these are expressions of a Christ-like God. Whatever in the universe makes against such belief I put to one side as something not yet understood. I trust the Christ-likeness of God when the appearances seem to be against Him.

My mind works best on the assumption that we live in a knowable world. My will holds fast to moral ideals most tenaciously when I believe that these ideals are manifestations of the Real. Moreover, when I find that the type of life which I most revere in others is nourished by trust in the Christ-likeness of God, I find encouragement in my conviction that in such trust I myself am on the right track. There is an element of venture in all this; but who wants a life without venture, especially when the venture is in the direction of the highest and best?

GOD IN CHRIST

RALPH TYLER FLEWELLING, PH.D.

UNIVERSITY OF SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA

Born in Michigan in 1871, Ralph Tyler Flewelling was educated at the University of Michigan, Cornell University, and the Garrett Biblical Institute. Ordained to the Methodist ministry in 1896, after a number of pastorates in New England — notably at the Harvard Street Church, Cambridge — he became head of the department of philosophy in the University of Southern California — in which capacity he also served in the A.E.F. University, Beaune, France, in 1918.

The first book by Dr. Flewelling to attract attention was *Christ and the Dramas of Doubt*, a brilliant study of great positive minds on the negative side of faith, followed by *Personalism and the Problems of Philosophy*, *Bergson and Personal Idealism*, and *The Reason in Faith*. He was the founder and is the editor of *The Personalist*, a quarterly devoted to philosophy, literature, and theology.

Of his own faith, in which he finds inward sustaining and strength, he tells us in the following essay, with an intimacy at once illuminating and disarming. For Dr. Flewelling God lived and walked among men, revealing His reality and character in a shining Figure of heroic moral loveliness, to know whom is to find all the most precious personal values attested and transfigured.

GOD IN CHRIST

RALPH TYLER FLEWELLING, PH.D.

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My idea of God grows out of my sense of need. I find myself baffled and constrained on every side. A strict limit is set to my achievement. I wish and will with all the strength of my life for good to come in the life of society, for right choices on the part of my students, that they may somehow be kept from things that will put upon them the shackles of limitation from which in some measure I have suffered. I find myself largely powerless and inefficient in bringing the better day to society. My best efforts and most sacrificial fall back upon myself with a vast sense of futility and of helplessness before the moral problems of the race. If I am to keep working on, I can do it only in the consciousness that the concave of my human weakness is complemented by a convex of moral power — one which neither slumbers nor sleeps, which eventually causes even the wrath of the wicked to praise Him.

Therefore my God must in the very beginning be possessed of two characteristics: He must be moral and He must be personal. One could as truly say

that He is moral only because He is personal. An abstract Absolute, who is the rain and the sun and the dew, the rising sap, the rustling leaf, the moving brook, the flying eagle, the startled deer, the amœba and the bacillus, the whirlwind and the fire, the force of construction and the contrary force of destruction — is, as God, meaningless to me. Life would not be long enough to measure out the constructive forces and weigh them against the destructive ones, to tell whether the balance were for good or for evil. I should not be able to tell whether I am called upon to worship the Holy One or the Evil One, like the famous sailor who, in direful uncertainty as to his future, prayed to both. I could worship Abstractness as God, only by saying and believing that there is no evil.

But I cannot say there is no evil without first blinding my eyes to the plain facts of life, and, secondly, sidestepping that pursuit of duty, that following of moral responsibility, which alone endows me with moral character and makes my life worth the world's while. To think of God as *in* everything living and good need not however commit me to think Him identical with His creatures. For there lies within the deeps of every human personality, like the mark of a family resemblance upon a man's face, only infinitely more real and significant, the mark of a divine image which is transcendence. The painter

paints his picture. It speaks loudly of color and canvas, of design and artistry, but it speaks even more deeply of the painter himself. It reveals the very soul of my friend. His interpretation of life, his outlook on the world, his kindliness of thought, his spirituality of disposition, his reaction to friendship and pain and success and treason, to education and limitation, are written into that picture with as unerring and as decipherable a hand as were ever written. No one else could have painted a picture like that; no one else would. He is immanent in his picture.

It would be a short-sighted judgment for me therefore to conclude that this is all there is of my friend. No one would be so foolish as to say to himself, I will gather together all the pictures my artist friend ever painted and then I shall have *him*. No, while he is immanent in this work of his, he has by this very expression of himself grown to something greater and can paint a thousand pictures which shall be better than any here. All that he needs for this is to live. He is therefore transcendent as well as immanent in his work; and this connection of immanence with transcendence seems to be dependent upon what we call the quality of life and personality. When therefore I come to think of God, my heart demands that God shall be both immanent and transcendent; and there is no incongruity in the

possession of both these qualities if He be a living and personal God.

A dead God, a static God, one who cannot meet the crisis of change, can never meet my needs who must face day by day in new ways the ever-changing problems of life and knowledge. Furthermore, to such a God my struggle, my moral victory or defeat, would be utterly meaningless, because He would have struck the moral balance long ago and could have no further interest in results which He had specifically known since the beginning. I must have a Living God of continuing responsibility. I think of Him then as creative. He not only created the world in the long ago; He just as clearly creates it now as ever. It is not something that, having begun, could run on and on without Him. It is His living masterpiece. His will keeps momentarily valid all that sweep of infinite relationships which we call the cosmos, and of which as yet the children of men have spelled out only a tiny fraction of the alphabet of meaning.

That centre of infinite activity which we call an atom is but the forceful manifestation of His purpose. The world itself, with all its relations, is sustained and upheld by Him. Hence it is literally as well as figuratively true that not a sparrow falls without the Father's notice, and that vaster dream of another poet, reiterated by the greatest Christian seer

of all the ages, becomes startlingly true: "In him we live, and move, and have our being . . . for we are also his offspring." This Living God, Who is thus continuously manifesting Himself, has seen fit apparently to provide a world of cosmic relations and to divide power over it with at least one type of His creatures. These creatures owe this power to their ability to reflect upon their own mental moods and responses. Their appearance introduces a new element into the situation, because a world that was already pronounced good must now include a voluntary goodness on the part of these creatures who through reflection are endowed with moral choice.

It was a venturesome and a troublesome matter, this of introducing rival powers into His Kingdom. Venturesome because the outcome is in doubt through the possible choice of evil by these creatures, troublesome because it brought to the Creator new moral responsibility. But it was a distinct advance in creation, because this creation involved character — a world that could be in harmony, intellectual and moral, with its Creator. If we must think of morality and personality in the Creator, then a creation lacking in moral elements would have been imperfect. Thus I find myself endowed with certain limited powers, with certain limited freedom, and in order to achieve my best and highest self-expression I find thrust upon me the task of

coöperating with God in finishing His morally uncompleted world.

Now this is a task which forbids the petty. It denies me the right to live like the beasts, to be absorbed solely in food and drink, the pleasures of the eye, the prides and passions of power and lust. Here is a call to all that is divine, and obviously I can accomplish even a slight portion of such a mission as this only by giving myself wholly to it. Such a devotion, however, great and entrancing as it may appear, calls for toil, for sustained weariness, for sacrifice. It may mean the loss of physical life itself, and who can assure me that a man shall do well *not* to save his life "when for the truth he ought to die"? Is there any human, any living example of this, who can set it in unmistakable and concrete terms so that he who runs may read? Is God Himself demanding of me a sacrifice for truth which He would not make? If He is, then for me to lay down my life for or even to suffer for truth, is to be superior to God; and such a God I cannot worship. How then am I to identify goodness with God?

The sages tell us of a Man who came and who impressed even His enemies with his sinlessness. That is to say, the only faults they could find in Him were the conventional ones, like breaking certain liturgical rules that had been laid down by long custom, and which had created an artificial conscience for the

men of His time. Certain startled followers managed to tell and write what they recalled of His words and deeds. Through all these eighteen centuries He has remained in the fierce limelight of criticism and of hostility, and yet the Man has continued to grow. One can go to the darkest jungles of Africa and tell the story of this Man's love, and whatever his race or previous condition of ignorance or moral darkness the man who hears it can never be at peace in his heart again until to the conviction, "That is the kind of man I ought to be," he adds the resolve, "That is the kind of man, through God, I am going to be." When he makes that resolve peace comes into his heart. Where men in considerable groups make it, the face both of nature and of society changes. The self-expressions of men become kindlier and juster; arts and culture are winged with a new spirit, and there grows a new earth.

There is about this universal conviction something cosmic. I can explain His curiously universal applicability to all ages and all men only on a double ground. He must first have been intensely human to pull so many human heartstrings. He must have been typically human. He must be what all of us should be at our best. To stop there, however, is to condemn Him with faint praise. More than that, it is embarrassing to ourselves who claim to be co-workers, co-creators with the Eternal. We

could scarcely be this unless we were sons of the Divine, partakers in the Divine nature. Where then shall we place this Man? When we read His story we say, Yes, God must love like that. When we study His relations with poor men and rich men, with petted men and outcast men, with religious men and with irreligious men, with men who came to swine husks through riotous living and men who happened on the drier husks of a loveless religion, we say to ourselves, If God Himself were here in the flesh He would do something like that. And so this Man becomes to us not only the picture of what we ought to be, but also the picture of what God is; and because we cannot distinguish between Goodness and Goodness, we say, Of a truth, this *is* the Son of God.

So overwhelming a conclusion is not reached, however, without certain uncomfortable questionings. "Was He, as infant, consciously upholding the cosmos?" Of such kind are the silly ponderings of men who demand that spiritual insight shall only creep upon all fours. The question not only is inappropriate — it has no application to the facts. It is but the shadow of human stupidity. Such questions are asked only because we linger in the lap of old superstition and worship still a God of Power rather than one of Love. The essence of God has to do with love and character, and not with

omniscience and omnipotence and omnipresence — those words by which we attempt to express what we cannot know, the relation of God to the little spatial and temporal order which closes us round, but which we believe does not limit Him.

My neighbor comes to me and exhibits his strength, showing the weight he can lift, and his physical superiority to me, and he makes me wonder; but there is no power there that can make me love him. Or he displays before me his far-reaching intellectual prowess, so in excess of my dull achievement as to be like a highly polished Damascan sword contrasted with a dull kitchen case-knife. I admire his intellectuality; but there is nothing therein that could make me love him. But now my neighbor shows a quality of moral grandeur, of sympathy and sacrifice; he loves me; and perforce I find myself in a relation to him involving obligation whether I will it or not. I am drawn to him; I cling to him, I will follow him always.

The supremest manifestation of Himself that God can make is the manifestation of His love, and thereby of His moral character. Love rather than fear is, by the very nature of the case, the very centre of genuine worship. What sort of wisdom then is that which sets one manifestation or expression of God over against another as if they were in perpetual quarrel, as if God in one manifestation

could be angry at Himself in another manifestation? To say that Christ was the highest manifestation of God is not to say that He was the only one.

I leave, then, such unprofitable questions to the theologians, who seem to love to fight about them and to grow angry against each other about them, even to chains and dungeons and burnings at the stake, and that even more bitter modern punishment of calumny and neglect. It is enough for me to be able to find this Christ, my guide to better living, my stay in the storms of trouble, my light in the darkness of death, the Great Companion along every way I am called to travel; for somehow, in actual experience, I reach out to find His hand in the darkness, and discover that I am holding the Hand of God!

MY ALL-GOD

BROWN LANDONE, F.R.Econ.Soc.

HACKENSACK, NEW JERSEY

As a swift summing up of long experience and earnest — often bewildered — thought concerning God, who is the great Meaning of Life to which all partial facts contribute, the essay by Brown Landone is an extraordinary piece of thinking and writing, as vivid in its style as it is keen in its analysis, cutting through all kinds of cobwebs until it finds a faith at once comprehensive and triumphant.

The writer is a scientifically trained, spiritually minded layman, educated by private tutors and in European schools and colleges, who has devoted himself to research and service of many kinds. Fellow of the Royal Economic Society of London, he was lecturer at the Sorbonne in 1915–16, and was appointed Envoyé Spécial des Amitiés Françaises to the United States by President Poincaré in 1917.

Such an essay by a man of experience so varied in both practical and spiritual affairs would seem to point the way the mind of our time is searching for the one Reality, at once august and intimate, without which the amazing achievements of modern civilization will end in spiritual obfuscation and futility.

MY ALL-GOD

BROWN LANDONE, F.R.E.S.

HACKENSACK, N. J.

From spiritual malaria I suffered long and intensely. Its periods of refrigerated goodness alternated with bursts of flaming youth; its recurring chilly Thou-shalt-not's alternated with heart-hot desires for joy. And so, for a generation, I knew not from one year to the next in what terms I did or could think of God. No sooner did I place my feet flat-footedly on what seemed for the moment to be a solid idea of God than it began to disintegrate beneath me, and I was compelled by spiritual necessity to grasshopper to some other idea, suggested by priest or parson or poet, or born of my own prayer and dreams. Each of these ideas was a part-God concept; each was a reactive concept.

Once a God of punishment to be feared, then reaction — and a God of love too sentimentally kind to enforce justice.

Once a God capriciously blessing or cursing, then reaction — and a God of law, fixed and absolute, and hence unmindful of any appeal of any human heart.

Once a concept of all-dependence upon matter,

then reaction — and a concept of all-dependence upon Mind, with its denial of matter and its creation of a thousand little devils of suppositional error, a thousand devils with which to cope in the darkness of mortal mind instead of one well-known Satan to be met in open battle.

Once a personal God in a physical heaven, with angels (if the account be brought up to date) tuning-in Tiffany radio sets and flying airplanes with motors of gold and wings of pearl, then reaction — and a God of Principle only, lacking in personal love, and forever unchanging as the code of the Medes.

Each was a part-God idea, conceived to complement some other part-God idea. More, each was a reactive concept, opposing and balancing some idea previously held. And worse, each was a pendulum swing to one side, necessitating a return to the other, which made me so spiritually dizzy that I visioned a new hell of innumerable dangling pendulums, each pendulum a human soul.

Sick in spirit, I stopped soul-still, resolved that a no-god was better than swinging forever from one part-God to another. So, longing with my whole soul for the stability of an All-God, I found Him!

My All-God is All! He is infinite in fact as well as in phraseology, including not only essence, presence, existence, and attributes, but also all processes, means, conditions, and things. The

truth of His infinite presence was at first only an idea. It is now, however, the existence in which I live. He surrounds me; I am in Him and cannot get out of Him; He extends out from me, from star to star and trillions of miles beyond. Within me, He permeates me; He penetrates to every cell and atom of my body. I am saturated with Him; and literally in Him I live and move and have my being.

So also, my All-God surrounds, permeates, penetrates, and saturates the frog and the blade of grass, the bluebird and the cherry blossom, the mountain and the universe.

My All-God is within me. As I know that there is electricity in my study to give me light, so I know that God is in me. As I know that not all the electricity of the universe is in my study, so I know that not all of God is in me. I am a son of God, made in His image; Christ is The Son of God. I am one ray of light, perhaps this color, perhaps that; Christ is the pure Light of all.

My All-God is faith, and I no longer shy even at the term "blind faith," for that at least is freedom — freedom from the petty habit of crabbily doubting all things which my own little eyes have not seen or my own hands made. I have not yet straddled a radio message and ridden it from New York to London, yet I have faith that such messages are sent. So I do not doubt those truths of God which

my reason has not yet lassoed and galloped to the end of time. What is reason, anyway, that it should always try to blackball faith and forever fail to do so? Every process of reasoning begins with an assumption; and no man ever reasons about anything except to try to prove to himself that he knows something which he knows he does not know.

With youthful faith, I accepted the doctrines of the Church. With smart learning, I later rejected all of them. Now, with some wisdom sired by humble pride and conceived in suffering, I know that they are true. Since Loeb has whip-whapped soap bubbles into living substance, why doubt that pure Divinity can conceive a Son?

My All-God makes His creation good. Once I assigned to myself the duties of a Super-God-Supreme-Court-Justice, to pass on the reliability of God's statements and the nature of His creation. I divided His works into good things and evil things, commending spiritual means as born of God and condemning material means as born of error.

I was learned then in truth. Now, with less conceit, I know that God knew what He was talking about when He declared that everything He had made was very good. He had all the evidence before Him; I had not a thousandth part of it. First, He had made all things, out of Himself; second, He had consecrated all things to man's use and specifically

stated that He did so;[1] third, after His creation was finished, He carefully reviewed all things He had made;[2] and fourth, only when He had done so, did He pass judgment that all was very good.

I now accept His statement and see God in every substance. Salt for example, is a crystallization of a God thought, radiated to create a certain substance to perform its function after its kind; and consequently the use of a substance, idealized thus to effect a result after its kind, is as spiritual as the use of Mind to work a change after its kind.

As to the goodness of man and the trial in Eden, I deem the opinions of theologians of three or five thousand years after the event of little value. I accept only the testimony of eyewitnesses. Other than the woman who was accused as the evildoer, there were but two such witnesses — Adam and God Himself. When the trial was over, Adam declared that the accused should be called "Eve, because she was the mother of all living," in which I find no censure. The conclusion of God was, "Behold, the man is become as one of us," in which I find no "fall."

The nature of the goodness of God Himself is revealed by *tob*, *tab*, and *tub*, which in the Bible are the only Hebrew words frequently translated by the English words, "good" and "goodness." They

[1] Genesis, 1: 26–28. [2] *Ibid.*, 1: 31.

are also translated by "prosperity, pleasure, gladness"; or "joyful, cheerful, merry."

My All-God concept condemns nothing, idealizes all things, accepts God's statement that everything is very good, and makes use of all things!

But I wanted something more: I wanted to pray again. I studied the Hebrew words translated in the English Bible by the words, "pray," "prayer," and "praying." I found that the only important Hebrew word frequently translated "pray" in the Bible is *palal* and that the only Hebrew word frequently translated "prayer" is *tephillah*.

All words derived from the root of *palal* prove its meaning. *Pala* means to "be wonderfully made"; *pali* means "wonderful"; *pili* means "wonderful"; *peli* means "secret and marvelous wonders"; and *palal*, which is the word translated "pray," means "to judge oneself to be marvelously made"; "to recognize wondrous things within the self, and to do so habitually and continually."

Tephillah is formed of two basic roots: one means "singing and dancing with timbrels"; the other, the occasion for doing so.

Praying as God asks me to pray, I habitually and continuously recognize the miracle of man being wondrously made in the image of God, and sing and dance with joy because of it.

Learning the mirth of His goodness, my night

passed and my sun dawned. The God of mirth and laughter and dancing merriment is my God, this hour and forever. Christ tells me definitely what His aim here was: to give me life and to make His joy complete in me. I accept. Too long I delved in thought; now I dance in sunshine. In Him, the God of cheer and joy and dancing mirth, I live and move and have my being; and all things are well with me.

All-God is a Personal God. God as absolute principle and as personal love is not a contradiction. My soul manifests one minute as mind, working out algebraic problems according to absolute principle, in which operation there is no consciousness of personal love; yet with the touch of her lips to my cheek, or the pat of a little hand on my knee, or even the look of faith in the brown eyes of my Irish terrier, my soul manifests as personal love. One manifestation does not exclude the other. All-God is principle and also personal love.

In what terms I think of God, changes not at all the nature of Him or Them or It; but what I think and feel integrates or disintegrates life for me.

All-God is truly all-inclusive. The harmony of a humming bird's wings, the concert of whizzing electrons, the tam-tam jazz of the dance, the symphony written in the Milky Way with stars for notes and rays of light for bars — all are of God.

The Power that twirls a mist to a star and grinds a sun to star dust, I term God. The Energy that shoots through quintillions of years of space, I term God. The Activity that forever moves the sea and turns a billion suns; the Mind that calls forth a Betelgeuse and creates an electron; the Love that makes brothers of stars and stores up sweets for the bee; the Life that makes man produce man, fern produce fern, and atom atom; the Joy of stars eternally on the wing, of birds at dawn, of running waters, of singing leaves, of all laughter and mirth and cheer and dancing merriment, the joy of knowing that God *is* Joy — I term God.

Power, Energy, Activity, Mind, Love, Life, and Joy!

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My Idea of God

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